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UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

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PHD ENGLISH

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY ENGLISH PLAYHOUSES, 1560-1670

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another university for the award of any other degree

Signature: *Lana M Harper*

Abstract

This thesis presents a study of playhouse spaces and the theatre industry in early modern England, and how they developed from 1560-1670. The period considered spans the English civil wars and Commonwealth to complicate the notion of a cessation of theatrical activity in 1642, and argues against the division of theatre history into distinct Renaissance and Restoration periods. The study builds on recent scholarly trends which have productively read early modern playing companies as consistent cultural entities with individual identities, by extending and applying this methodology to playhouse spaces. As such, this thesis proposes that all early modern playhouses had unique identities, and suggests that the frequent division into amphitheatre and indoor playhouses can produce an oversimplified binary with homogenising consequences. Moreover, it argues that a problematic, undertheorized hierarchy of playhouses exists; a key factor being the strength of the playhouse's connection to Shakespeare, which has led to the prioritisation of the Globe in particular. This thesis problematises the metrics which have been used to assess the importance of playhouses; it offers alternative factors but also suggests it is more important to ascertain unique aspects of playhouse identities than to create a hierarchy between them.

Case studies of the Curtain (c.1577-c.1625), Salisbury Court (1629-1666) and Gibbons' Tennis Court (1653-c.1669) demonstrate how distinct aspects of playhouses' identities can be established by proposing dimensions of their unique reputations based on their known repertoires. Collectively, these studies also demonstrate how playhouse space developed over time. This study concludes that each of these playhouses have been undervalued in scholarly narratives. By producing substantial accounts of these neglected spaces this thesis contributes towards a rebalancing of emphasis in early modern scholarship, and it also demonstrates that a wider reappraisal of early modern playhouse space is necessary in the future.

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List of abbreviations

BL Add.MS – British Library Additional Manuscript Collections

C – Chancery Bills and Answers at National Archives (formerly Public Records Office)

CLRO – Corporation of London Records Officer

Folger – Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.

MOLA – Museum of London Archaeology

NA – National Archives (formerly Public Records Office), Kew London

ODNB - Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

OED – Oxford English Dictionary

ORD – Transcripts of Henry Herbert's Office Book made by Craven Ord

PMLA – Publications of the Modern Language Association of America

S.P Dom. – Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series

SQ – Shakespeare Quarterly

Note on texts

Most primary sources are cited in the first published edition, as there are not recent scholarly editions for many of the texts. In some instances, the first published edition is not the most reliable and therefore I have used a later text. Unless there is a textual reason for using an early quarto or a modern scholarly edition, Jonson and Shakespeare's plays are cited from the 1616 and 1623 folios. After the first footnote, play references are given in brackets in the body of the text, and Pepys' *Diary* is referred to only by date for ease of reference.

Quotations from early modern texts have been cited as in the original, although the long 's' has been substituted, and titles are cited in full in the bibliography. Dates have been modernised throughout.

Introduction

Resurgence and continuity in the English theatrical tradition

The third Globe theatre which stands on London's Southbank has now been operating for over 20 years. The first official season was in 1996, and it is still going strong at the time of writing in 2017.¹ This means that it has been operating as a theatre for longer than the first Globe playhouse, running for fourteen years from 1599-1613, and that relatively soon it will overtake the second Globe, which stood from 1614 until c.1653, and operated for 28 years until 1642. Unlike the first two Globes, it is hard to envisage Shakespeare's Globe closing soon. Without moral opposition to theatre, infectious disease epidemics or the prospect of civil war, and with a sprinkler system, the third Globe does not face any of the problems of its predecessors. Its popularity is consistent and increasing: the business reported 'a record income of £27million in 2016, an increase of 17 percent on the previous year with strong growth from all areas of our work'.² Even if the venue's commercial popularity were to falter, it seems likely that the building would be preserved in some form as an artefact of historical interest.

Erected on a site just over 200 metres from the foundations of the seventeenth century Globes, the modern Shakespeare's Globe is just one example of the architectural and topographical reiterations of theatrical space in London. The road which runs next to the building is called New Globe Walk, and a 'traditional British gastropub' called The Globe Tavern is less than ten minutes' walk away, as is the monument to Shakespeare and plaque for Sam Wanamaker, creator of Shakespeare's Globe, in Southwark Cathedral.³ Five minutes away, there is an enormous mural of Shakespeare, completed by graffiti artist Jimmy C with permission of Network Rail, who own the wall it is painted on.⁴ The topographical traces of early modern theatrical activity are nowhere more apparent than in the area where the first and second Globe theatres stood.

And yet, the Globe is far from the only early modern theatrical space which is still present in modern London: there are many other less famous and less lucrative examples. Just around the corner the Rose's architectural remains are exposed underneath an office block, with a wooden

¹ Shakespeare's Globe, *Previous Productions: The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (2017) <<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discovery-space/previous-productions/the-two-gentlemen-of-verona-1>> [accessed 3 April 2017]

² Shakespeare's Globe, *Annual Review, 2016* (2016) <<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/about-us/todays-globe/annual-review>> [accessed 1 April 2017]

³ Globe Tavern, *Home* (2017) <<http://www.theglobeboroughmarket.com/#the-bar-home>> [accessed 14 May 2017]

⁴ London SE1 community website, *Shakespeare mural appears in Clink Street tunnel* (2016) <<http://www.london-se1.co.uk/news/view/8973>> [accessed 13 May 2017]

mezzanine overhanging them, on which early modern plays are performed. The Blackfriars tube and railway station are named after the medieval monastery that stood nearby, but also recall the two playhouses which occupied rooms of the precinct. As the Curtain is excavated in Shoreditch, pubs, roads and signs everywhere start to change their nomenclature to reflect their claim to theatrical fame.

The bubbling resurgence of early modern theatrical spaces in London topography over the last few decades demonstrates a profound trend in English theatrical tradition: that the resonances of theatrical space are rarely eradicated entirely. Even when this appears to be the case it can transpire to be incorrect: the Curtain has lay in obscurity for centuries, both physically and in books. It was not even known exactly where it had been located: much scholarship which did address the playhouse in the twentieth century was trying to establish exactly this. It is only now with the discovery of its remains that the playhouse begins to come to the fore again. Perhaps the same could be true for theatrical spaces that currently lay unmarked and unknown: the Theatre, with remains destroyed but just a couple of hundred metres from the Curtain site; Newington Butts, probably near the roundabout at Elephant and Castle; Werburgh Street in Dublin, all of which are completely unmarked. Eva Griffith is currently running a campaign to have a blue plaque erected on the site of the Red Bull theatre. These are theatres which appear to have been forgotten, and had all physical and topographical traces eradicated. But this is not the case: in this thesis I will propose that London theatrical space operates like a palimpsest, and that although layers build up to obscure traces of what was there before, it is rare that theatrical resonances are completely destroyed. Moreover, scratching the surface will often reveal the layers underneath.

This process extends to the modern day, but is itself a trend which has been reiterated since the early modern period. The concept of continuity underpins my consideration of how theatrical space developed in the early modern period: I argue that although it was a period of explosive innovation, it was also one of continuation, reiteration and memory. As such, the period considered in this thesis extends from what are widely recognised to be the first dedicated London theatre spaces in the 1560s and 1570s, through to the end of the 1660s. This includes the English civil wars and Commonwealth period, which are often considered to be devoid of theatrical developments, and to have created a definitive split in English dramatic traditions. This thesis argues that this is not the case, and that the entire period was a slow reiterative process in which theatrical tradition, space and repertory all survived and, indeed, developed. The rest of this introduction will survey existing early modern scholarship of playhouse space, and demonstrate how this thesis develops on current research into the identities of individual playing companies by extending this consideration to overarching playhouse identities.

Playhouse identity, space and repertory

There are several classic overview studies of early modern theatre space which are extremely influential, comprehensive and valuable. E. K. Chambers' *The Elizabethan Stage*, G. E. Bentley's *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* and Leslie Hotson's *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage* are invaluable factual resources and key reference texts for work in this period, along with the more recent *English Professional Theatre 1530-1660*.⁵ As well as compiling documentary evidence, all have been influential in producing narratives and interpretations of the evidence that have influenced subsequent research: while this thesis questions the accuracy of many of these conclusions, and their methods of producing theatre historiography, it is also indebted to them, as these challenges and reinterpretations would not be possible without the wealth of information that they provided.

A key shift in the study of early modern drama since the first three of these studies were published has been the decentering of the concept of the author, which has partially followed broader trends in literary theory in the twentieth century since Roland Barthes' essay 'The Death of the Author'.⁶ Early modern studies have been more resistant to this than many literary disciplines: Gabriel Egan highlights the tendency of Shakespeare Studies to 'return to its first principles'.⁷ The resistance of the discipline to moving away from an author-focused model is in some ways surprising because the construction of early modern playscripts was often a collaborative process, and one which was probably often imbued with less of a sense of authorial ownership than later works of canonical literature. This is evidenced in the word 'playwright' itself, which alludes to the craftsmanship of a 'wright' rather than the process of writing, and Paul Yachnin points out that Jonson's insult 'stage-wright' is designed to 'point to the absolute difference between the transcendent value of the poet and the social degradation of the men who worked like manual laborers' producing work for the public playhouse.⁸ Moreover, Tiffany Stern convincingly argues that the pejorative term 'play-patcher' demonstrates that 'a play was pieced together out of a collection of odds and ends: it was not a single whole entity'.⁹

The reason for the continued focus on an author-centred approach to early modern drama, then, appears to have been largely due to Shakespeare being posthumously established as a

⁵ *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923); *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage: Dramatic Companies and Players*, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1941-1968); *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928); Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry and William Ingram, eds., *English Professional Theatre 1530-1660*, *Theatre in Europe: a documentary history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁶ *Aspen*, 5+6 (1967).

⁷ 'Discoveries from archaeology: Dealing with the past in the present', *Shakespeare*, 7.4 (2011), p.395.

⁸ *Stage-wrights: Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and the making of theatrical value* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), p.xi.

⁹ *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.1.

genius who produced quintessentially English yet universal drama. I will argue throughout this thesis that Shakespeare's subsequent reputation profoundly skews all aspects of early modern theatre historiography. This is not intended to denigrate Shakespeare's work or importance: he was an extremely popular and important playwright, and his subsequent influence on society and culture can hardly be underestimated. But nevertheless, this subsequent influence is vastly disproportionate to his place in the early modern theatre industry at the time, and disentangling something approaching an accurate picture of early modern playing space becomes clouded by the extent of his influence on research and historical narratives, which was already beginning soon after his death.

Despite these complications, this reframing has begun to take place in early modern theatre history studies, and it is in this trend that this thesis intends to situate itself and develop from. For early modern theatre historiography, the death of the author has meant the birth of the playing company. Scott McMillian and Sally-Beth MacLean inaugurated the shift away from an author-centric approach with their study of the Queen's Men and their repertory.¹⁰ Since then numerous monographs have been produced which consider the repertory, reputation and unique identities of various playing companies, most notably Mary Bly's *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queens*, Lucy Munro's *Children of the Queen's Revels*, Eva Griffith's *A Jacobean Company and their Playhouse*, and Andrew Gurr's *The Shakespeare Company*, and *Shakespeare's Opposites*.¹¹

Roslyn Knutson has pushed repertory studies to its limit, positing that an overriding 'house style' of plays can be so strong it can be used to test whether plays of uncertain attribution were members of the repertory. She highlights that this method is 'risky and liable to gross error', but nevertheless it shows how demonstrable company identity was.¹² The coherent stylistic trends in company repertories are apparent enough to be identifiable despite the fact that, as William Ingram has noted, the very concept of a stable company identity is questionable, and companies were 'always an ephemeral thing, no more susceptible of meaningful biographical limning than any other ongoing corporate body'.¹³

Griffith's work is unusual in the amount of focus given to the geographical location of Queen Anne's Men at the Red Bull playhouse, and its significance in the creation of a company identity and theatrical experience. In this instance, the company were strongly associated with

¹⁰ *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹¹ *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queens on the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); *A Jacobean Company and Its Playhouse: The Queen's Servants at the Red Bull Theatre (c.1605-1619)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); *The Shakespeare Company* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); *Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company, 1592-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹² 'The Start of Something Big', in *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603: Material Practices and Conditions of Playing*, ed. by Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p.99.

¹³ 'What Kind of Future for the Theatrical Past: Or, What will Count as Theater History in the next Millennium?', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 48.2 (1997), p.221.

one playhouse, and Griffith considers the company and playhouse's reputation and development in tandem. My intervention into the field is to propose that company and playhouse do not need to map directly on to each other for an overarching consideration of playhouse identity to be fruitful. Extending Knutson's concept of 'house style' from companies to playhouses as conceptual entities, I suggest reading extant evidence in tandem with the repertory performed across a playhouse's life can be used to reconstruct aspects of the playhouse's unique identity, irrespective of the playing company behind individual performances.

Thus, just as original audiences may have had a conception of the style of a company, so they may also have had a conception of a style of a playhouse which transcended the players who inhabited it at the time. This relies on the idea of a venue as an imaginative entity, and while any constructed sense of playhouse identity will always be slippery, this is further complicated by the meanings created through the activities and topographical realities of the space over time. Indeed, the perpetual layers of meaning may begin to be created by the area before the playhouse's life can be said to have begun, and may continue long after it ceased to operate. Sarah Dustagheer highlights that 'features or characteristics of a given space [including] the perceptions and expectations society had' would have contributed towards the production of a playhouse's spatial meaning; in the case of the second Blackfriars, its location in a former monastery would have been imbued with a weight of history and meaning.¹⁴ Moreover, just as the residual memory of the Globe is scattered around the modern Southbank, I will argue that the traces of playhouse space continued to have a presence and resonance once the buildings had gone.

This constant development of playhouse identity demands attention not only to the most famous or aesthetically valued work performed at the playhouse, but their entire lifespan, and perhaps beyond. It also means that playhouse identity is slippery: it would have been a constantly evolving and unstable concept, and moreover one which would have varied wildly for different individuals based on their phenomenological experiences and knowledge of the area, building and previous companies and performances.

Playhouse identity does not need to have been stable or deliberately crafted to have existed, even if it was in almost endlessly varied iterations across time and individuals. Nor does it mean that those who inhabited it did not respond to their perception of its identity. Just as playwrights 'could write plays which disregarded or developed a company's spatial practices',

¹⁴ 'Repertory and the Production of Theatre Space at the Globe and the Blackfriars, 1599-1613' (unpublished doctoral thesis, King's College London and Shakespeare's Globe, 2011), p.40.

so I suggest that companies would interact with their current understanding of the playhouse they inhabited, and either capitalise on or deviate from its existing identity.¹⁵

The interpretations offered by this thesis cannot be definitively proved, and are themselves narratives constructed – possibly incorrectly – from the evidence available. Nevertheless, the problems of complex and partial evidence are not new. John H. Astington has noted that the complex movements of companies between playhouses means that ‘the authority of repertory lists [...] is somewhat illusory’, but I suggest that repertories do not need to be definitive to be highly informative.¹⁶ For documentary and anecdotal evidence from the period, it is apparent that no claims to comprehensivity could ever be made, or indeed that it is conceptually imaginable that such a body of information could exist. Moreover, the inability to provide irrefutable proof or a metanarrative which can encapsulate all aspects of a playhouse’s varied, multi-faceted and evolving identity does not need to be problematic. As Ingram notes, full interpretive clarity does not mesh with theoretical systems ‘premised on ontological or at least epistemological indeterminacy’ and thus any claims to such a state of clarity ‘ought to be suspect in any nonpositivist system’.¹⁷

Thus, what this thesis can and will do is examine and to some degree unpick the overarching narratives surrounding three particular early modern playhouses, and re-assemble one new narrative thread for each. The reinterpretations of these three venues will also have profound implications for the valuation of all early modern playhouse spaces, and offer a replicable methodology for future scholarship to apply to other playhouse spaces, or to construct additional - or conflicting - interpretations to the ones I propose.

¹⁵ Dustagheer, ‘Repertory and the Production of Theatre Space’, p.40.

¹⁶ ‘The “Messalina” Stage and Salisbury Court Plays’, *Theatre Journal*, 43.2 (1991), p.155.

¹⁷ ‘What Kind of Future for the Theatrical Past,’ p.219.

Chapter 1

Interpreting Playhouse Development in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

1. The Canonisation of Playhouse Space

This chapter will make the case that just as the corpus of early modern drama has undergone a process of either canonisation or marginalisation, so theatre history narratives have produced a 'canon' of early modern playhouse spaces, while side-lining and excluding others. This canonisation process has rarely been explicitly stated, and there are critical sources that provide more nuanced and balanced overviews. My analysis attempts to reflect the overall position of critical discussion, based on narratives constructed by scholarship as a whole.

The first section will consider how spaces have come to be included or excluded in discussion of playhouse space, and the problems that exist with the non-representation of certain spaces in which dramatic performances took place. Simultaneously, however, it will acknowledge that by primarily considering playing spaces whose main purpose was theatrical performances by adults, and which charged an entry fee, this thesis perpetuates the same canonisation process to some degree. The aspect of playhouse canonisation that it will address in greater detail is the hierarchy constructed between playhouse spaces within this more limited grouping; it will unpack the ways this remaining group of theatrical spaces have been judged to be important or unimportant.

The second section will reappraise how it might be possible to consider the value of playhouses in a way that is less problematic, providing alternative metrics for viewing early modern theatrical spaces. It will also query the usefulness of constructing narratives which rank the importance of playhouses against each other, and argue that all playing spaces had unique identities which are equally interesting and important to reconstruct.

Playing spaces to be considered

This thesis primarily considers playhouses in London where adult companies acted, which were open to the paying public, and whose primary purpose was to provide drama. However, there were many more playing spaces in early modern England than those included in this categorisation, and they are interconnected and relevant to the playhouse canonisation process; it is not my intention to suggest they are peripheral to English dramatic traditions, but to some degree excluding them perpetuates this marginalisation, and as such I will briefly discuss the issues that have surrounded them.

Inns which hosted performance have 'generally been ignored or glossed over in histories of the Elizabethan stage': but the Bull, the Bell, the Bell Savage and the Cross Keys hosted

performances from the mid-1570s to the mid-1590s.¹⁸ These spaces have been overwhelmingly neglected, being ‘by far the least known and least studied’, but have recently been the subject of work by David Kathman, who presents new evidence relating to their characteristics and operations.¹⁹ The existence of the inn playhouses, and the acceptance of them as legitimate spaces of dramatic performance, complicates the influential theories of Steven Mullaney, who argued that theatre was pushed to the liberties and peripheries of London because it was a socially unacceptable activity, and would have been prosecuted by the Puritan-dominated and therefore theatre-hostile City.²⁰ As all of these inns were within the city walls apart from the Bell Savage, their existence undermines this theory: Herbert Berry notes that their presence in the City of London defies what we believe we know about Elizabethan playhouses, and Janette Dillon argues that theatre’s relationship to the city was more complex than Mullaney suggests because although outdoor playhouses were all outside the city limits or in liberties, ‘playing at inns within city limits continued until the 1590s’ and therefore they ‘are not simply marginal’ but their ‘location and status is more complex’.²¹

One way the inns have been considered as conceptually different to other theatres is the idea that because they also operated as inn-houses the City may have tolerated them as they had different rules for establishments with a different primary purpose.²² Glynne Wickham draws attention to the fact that the ‘few remaining references to these inns [...] are almost equally divided between prize-fights and stage-plays’ and that only companies with the Queen and Lord Strange as patrons are recorded as having performed there, which he suggests is why playing at the inns was tolerated by the City.²³ However, if this was the case it does not account for why those companies protected by powerful patrons did not extend their playing to other venues within the walls, or construct playhouses there.

Moreover, dividing venues based on whether they had sole or multiple purposes erects a somewhat arbitrary division between the inns and venues such as the Hope, which also operated as a bear-baiting arena but is always conceptually grouped with the playhouses. Perhaps it is considered validated due to its hosting performances of Ben Jonson’s plays, or because bearbaiting was only thought to have taken place on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and so dramatic performances are considered the primary function as they presumably happened on

¹⁸ David Kathman, ‘Inn-Yard Playhouses’, in *Oxford Companion to Early Modern Drama*, ed. by Richard Dutton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.153.

¹⁹ Kathman, ‘Inn-Yard Playhouses’, p. 153; pp.153-167.

²⁰ See *The Place of the Stage: License, Play and Power in Renaissance England*, 2nd edn (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995), esp. pp.1-26.

²¹ Herbert Berry, ‘The Bell Savage Inn and Playhouse in London’, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 19 (2006), p.121; Janette Dillon, *Theatre, Court and City, 1595-1610: Drama and Social Space in London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.33.

²² Implied in Wickham, *Early English Stages*, II, p.96.

²³ Wickham, *Early English Stages*, II, p.99.

the four other available days. These distinctions are further blurred by the use of inn and suburban playhouses for fencing prizes. O. L. Brownstein's data suggests that inns, especially the Bull, were the most frequently used venues, but that the Curtain and Theatre were also used, especially during times of plague.²⁴

The inns also demonstrate that a lack of evidence relating to a venue can operate as a significant deterrent to scholars in undertaking work on it. Collectively, this leads to a bias against playhouses without much extant evidence relating to them, as this influences the amount of discussion they receive in overview histories; this factor will be particularly relevant when discussing the Curtain playhouse.

However, the presence of evidence does not always correlate with importance in playhouse narratives. Even though there is an abundance of evidence relating to the Boar's Head – as detailed in Berry's monograph on the playhouse – it does not generally feature heavily in discussions of early modern playing space, moreover, while evidence about the Chamberlain's Men is often lacking they are the most frequently discussed company, with many conclusions about their practice derived from the more abundant evidence relating to the Admiral's Men.²⁵ Moreover, performances at the Inns of Court and venues such as Whitehall, the Cockpit-at-Court and other private halls or aristocratic houses are also frequently excluded from narratives of theatrical tradition despite a good deal of information being available for them in many instances. While they did not host public performances, considering the patronage system and doubling of repertories between public theatre and court performances there is significant interplay between the traditions, and perhaps the performance spaces – the Cockpit and Cockpit-in-Court clearly must have shared some key characteristics.

Moreover, the Inns of Court were also within the city walls, which again qualifies the suggestion that theatrical activity was excluded from the City. This was also true of many performance venues that solely housed performances by children's companies, which are also often marginal in playhouse narratives. The primary reason in this instance is their origins as groups of choirboys who occasionally performed plays as well. As Michael Shapiro notes, because playing 'was a peripheral activity for them, they were regarded as amateurs, even though their masters often received remuneration for performances given to entertain nobility or royalty'.²⁶ While they transitioned over a number of years to effectively become commercial companies, in theory children's companies existed as choristers ready to entertain the

²⁴ 'A Record of London Inn-Playhouses from c. 1565-1590', *SQ*, 22.1 (1971), pp.18-21.

²⁵ *The Boar's Head Playhouse* (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1986); Melissa D. Aaron, 'Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company, 1594–1625 (review)', *Comparative Drama*, 45.2 (2011), p.146.

²⁶ *Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of Shakespeare's Time and Their Plays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p.1.

monarch: audiences technically paid to attend rehearsals.²⁷ This has made their status as commercial enterprises and therefore providers of public theatre slightly more complicated than adult companies, and academic opinion has varied. Alfred Harbage painted a picture of the boy companies as fervently capitalist enterprises under avaricious managers, but Shapiro countered that the profit motive was not particularly prominent before 1590, arguing that the children's companies' 'reputation, including its possible commercial value, was based on their role as providers of theatrical entertainment to the court', and that while adult companies took commercial theatre to the court, children's companies took court theatre to the public.²⁸

Even taking these technicalities into account, the inexact definition of children's company playhouses demonstrates how permeable the boundaries of playhouse canonisation are: Whitefriars is generally included in the canon of playhouses because it had the brief presence of an adult company, although for most of its short life it was inhabited by boy players.²⁹ Another factor which may distinguish it from St Paul's, for example, is that it was not a pre-existing space with other purposes, but had been converted into a playhouse. This is the same kind of distinction as that made between the four inn playhouses: in some conceptualisations, they do not count because they did not wholly change their purpose to playing, as did the Red Bull. Yet, the first Blackfriars, inhabited by a boy company for the entirety of its lifespan, is given more precedence, seemingly due to its proximity to the second Blackfriars and its subsequent fame. Although the two were not in the same room of the Blackfriars precinct, the first Blackfriars generates interest because of the inordinate weight put on the second Blackfriars' role in the early modern theatrical landscape.

Part of the rationale behind these distinctions is an understandable need to make generic categorisations and boundaries in order to create a comprehensible narrative about early playhouse variation and development. If no similarities or distinctions between venues can be noted, then the scope of playhouse studies becomes either too broad or endlessly qualified; indeed, this thesis has found it necessary at times to exclude some playing spaces from consideration, or to draw distinctions between different types of venue. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that these distinctions are partially constructed, and that the boundaries can be blurry and inexact.

Nevertheless, with these qualifications, the remaining group of public venues which housed adult companies and primarily operated as playhouses are: the second Blackfriars, the Boar's

²⁷ Michael Shapiro, 'Early (Pre-1590) Boy Companies and their Acting Venues', in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Drama* (see Kathman, above), p.121; Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre 1530-1660*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.288.

²⁸ *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), pp.90-119; 'Early (Pre-1590) Boy Companies', p.121.

²⁹ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, pp.547-549.

Head, the Cockpit, the Curtain, the Fortune, the Globe, the Hope, Newington Butts, the Red Bull, the Red Lion, the Rose, Salisbury Court, the Swan, the Theatre, and the Whitefriars. The second way that the canonisation of playhouses operates is to create a hierarchy among the spaces listed above, and it is this aspect which this thesis seeks to address. This hierarchy manifests through the quantity of academic writing produced on each, but also the kinds of narratives that are produced for each, especially statements about their importance in the early modern theatre industry, which can be treated as factual rather than constructed scholarly opinions. As such, certain venues in this group are marginalised in discussions of theatre space, while others are perpetually foregrounded, often for reasons which are unsatisfactory.

The list above may appear disorientating simply because the venues are listed in alphabetical order rather than, as is often the case, chronological order or descending order of perceived importance. One way hierarchy can be reproduced without being explicitly theorised is through familiar and repeated ordering in scholarly narratives: while not always identical these repeated patterns shape the way that importance is perceived even if unintentionally; this can be repeated without conscious awareness of why that order ‘feels right’. Theories of linguistic relativity (sometimes referred to as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis) suggest that the structure and use of language can influence thought, and in some more extreme versions of the theory, shape reality.³⁰ This theory supports my contention that word order is an important way of forming a hierarchy between concepts or entities, in much the same way that some feminist linguistic criticism has worked to disrupt the ubiquity of male-then-female linguistic patterns.³¹ The case studies of the Curtain and Salisbury Court will consider in detail the impact that being listed after the Theatre or the Blackfriars and Cockpit has had on the perception of these playhouses.

Another way this bias manifests is not through specific linguistic choices, but in the volume of work produced on different playhouses, which, while not being the fault of individual scholars, leaves an untheorised impression on readers of early modern theatre history that some venues were more important and others peripheral, due to the space they are awarded in the body of critical work. However, playhouses are also explicitly ranked: G. E. Bentley describes the second Blackfriars as ‘the premiere theatre of England’ from 1616 to 1642, with the Cockpit/Phoenix as the other principle Caroline playhouse after the Blackfriars, while the Red Bull ‘reigns supreme in ignominy’ and ‘violence and vulgarity seem to be the usual associations’

³⁰ John J. Gumperz and Stephen C. Levinson, eds., *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.38, pp.52-59.

³¹ Jennifer Saul, ‘Feminist Philosophy of Language’, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta, (Winter 2012) <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/feminism-language/>> [accessed 10 May 2017].

with it.³² Relatedly, Andrew Gurr has argued that the King's Men were the leading company with the Admiral's Men (later Prince Henry's Men) as their secondary counterparts, or 'Shakespeare's Opposites' as they were described in the title of his monograph on the company.³³ A rigid conceptualisation and hierarchisation of the complex network of playing companies then impacts on the perceived importance of playhouses based on the companies which inhabited them, and those most associated with the King's company are foregrounded. Indeed, while the King's Men do seem to have become the most important company in the early modern period, they did not always have the status conferred on them by the regent's patronage, formerly being known as the Chamberlain's Men. Yet the Chamberlain's Men are treated in the same way, and this can only be due to their connection to Shakespeare (who was by no means established as the exceptional, premiere playwright by this point, but simply one of a handful of the most successful), and perhaps anachronistically by reading forward to see what the company would become in the decades before the civil wars. It should also be noted from the treatment of the two main companies in the latter part of the century that being the company belonging to the King has not always incurred the same assumptions of superiority as it did with companies before the civil wars, and so this disparity appears largely due to the association of the King's Men with Shakespeare. But I will return to the influence of Shakespeare on the canonisation of playhouses in more depth later in the section.

Another aspect of playhouse canonisation is the perceived worthiness and artistic value of the venue, which seems to be inextricably linked with its wealth and class connotations. For this reason, the Red Bull, Curtain and Fortune in particular – indeed all outdoor venues with the possible exception of the Globe – have traditionally been dismissed as places for the bawdy, rough entertainment of undesirable people. It is difficult for scholarship to be impartial in this regard, as scholars' perceptions of what constitutes desirable and aesthetically valuable forms of entertainment and behaviour have been informed by their own social class affinities. For example, outdoor playhouses have been pejoratively described as 'rough' or 'popular', and as these modes of referring to certain spaces form through interaction with an existing body of scholarly writing, it becomes hard to refer to places such as the Red Bull as 'citizen' playhouses, without this being a loaded epithet imbued with the negative connotations of previous scholarly usage.

Of course, distinctions between aesthetics, classes and value were made in early modern records and reflections: English society in the seventeenth century was profoundly hierarchical. But modern scholarship does not need to adopt an early modern understanding of society, or recapitulate this world view when framing theatrical activity. At times, modern

³² *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage: Dramatic Companies and Players*, VI (Oxford: Clarendon, 1941-1968), p.4, p.47, p.238.

³³ *Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company, 1592-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

scholarship has appropriated the perspectives of early modern commentators; this risks reproducing early modern stereotypes and prejudices. Such appropriation is particularly apparent in the use of the terms ‘public’ and ‘private’ to describe outdoor and indoor public playhouses. Andrew Gurr notes that this distinction emerged circa 1600, and did not indicate a true difference in commercial function, but rather a snobbish distinction based on wealth, and to some degree, socio-economic class.³⁴ As such, use of ‘public’ and ‘private’ has decreased in modern scholarship, as it acknowledges that unproblematised use of these terms reproduces the prejudices of early modern commentators.³⁵

³⁴ *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 2nd rev. edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 13.

³⁵ Authorities such as Chambers and Bentley adopt the early modern distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ playhouses without questioning it. See for example, Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, I, p.xi; Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, pp.ix-x; Bentley, ‘The Theatre and the Actors’ in *The Revels History of Drama in English*, IV, ed. Philip Edwards, Gerald Eades Bentley, Kathleen McLuskie and Lois Potter (London: Methuen, 1981), pp.74-75 [published in 1923, 1968 and 1981 respectively]. By 1984 Butler’s *Theatre and Crisis* uses the terms ‘open-air’ and ‘indoor’, while placing ‘private’ and ‘public’ in inverted commas (see, for example, p.6, p.100, p.181). After this Keith Sturgess admits that “Private’ is a term that stands some scrutiny’, but does continue to use the distinction in *Jacobean Private Theatre* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), p.2. Most recently, Eoin Price aims to ‘overturn established thinking by offering fresh perspectives on [...] the intellectual concepts of ‘public’ and ‘private’ in the English Renaissance’ in his monograph *‘Public’ and ‘Private’ Playhouses in Renaissance England: The Politics of Publication* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.1.

The determining factors of playhouse hierarchy in early modern scholarship

Early modern playhouses are frequently given special status or attention if they are considered the first of a kind, or particularly innovative. The reverse also applies: playhouses which are *not* considered to be original in type can be considered derivative. The impulse behind these distinctions is understandable, and perhaps partly necessary – ‘firsts’ consistently hold a place of special importance in the narratives of development through which we can conceptualise social and historical phenomena generally. However, the difficulty arises because the tangled and multidimensional nature of social development means that things are rarely this simple.

Perhaps the most obvious example of a playhouse ‘first’ is the Theatre. Traditionally considered the first playhouse, largely due to Cuthbert Burbage’s assertion that his father James was ‘the first builder of Playhowses’, the Theatre is afforded a relatively superior position in terms of importance of early modern dramatic venues.³⁶ In contrast, the Curtain, traditionally thought to have been built a year later in 1577, is considered to be derivative, and less artistically – perhaps even morally – worthy because it is merely a copycat, money-making venture. Aside from this idea dubiously implying that Burbage’s Theatre was not also primarily a financial investment, it is only actually known that the Curtain was built *by* 1577, and as such it is a distinct possibility that the venue predated the Theatre. In addition to the uncertainty of the chronological order of the Curtain and Theatre, the idea of the Theatre as a ‘first’ overlooks that there were other performance venues in London before these Shoreditch spaces. Yet the Red Lion, which as far as extant records show, was actually the first playhouse constructed in London, is inconsequential in narratives of early modern theatre history for a number of reasons. The Red Lion had its first performance in July 1567 and had been abandoned by autumn 1568 at the latest, and as such was short lived; it has been difficult to write about this playhouse extensively because of the limited evidence relating to it until relatively recently; and since Chambers’s *The Elizabethan Stage* it has been assumed that it was converted from an inn, which led to its being grouped with the inn playhouses and similarly dismissed.³⁷

Under scrutiny these reasons are not valid. In addition to my previous contention that the reasons for marginalising the inns are invalid, Chambers’s assumption was incorrect and the

³⁶ W. W. Greg, ed., *Collections, Vol. II. Part 3* (Oxford: Malone Society, 1931), pp.370-1; for a comprehensive overview of those who have argued this, see Janet S. Loengard, ‘An Elizabethan Lawsuit: John Brayne, his Carpenter, and the Building of the Red Lion Theatre’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 34 (1983) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2869889>> [accessed 9 May 2017], p.300.

³⁷ Herbert Berry, ‘The First Public Playhouses, Especially the Red Lion’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 40 (1989), <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2870815>> [accessed 4 January 2016], p.144; *The Elizabethan Stage, II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), p.380.

Red Lion was later discovered to be ‘not an inn but a farmhouse, formerly called Stark's house, [...] the theatrical structures were in a yard on the south side of a garden belonging to the farmhouse’.³⁸ Chamber’s suggestion was a logical one given the name of the venue and that at the time of writing in 1923 he only had a small amount of evidence about the Red Lion available. Chamber’s evidence came from an entry by John Brayne in the court books of the Carpenter’s Company, and simply specified who had been contracted to undertake repairs on the scaffold and the payment they had agreed, with bonds being returned to the contractor after the first performance in the repaired venue.³⁹ But nevertheless, extrapolating from this that the venue was a ‘playing-inn’ and that the Theatre was a ‘far more important enterprise’, has perpetuated a narrative which marginalises certain types of venue, privileges others, and promotes oversimplified ‘truths’, such as the miraculous invention of English playhouse buildings in the sudden apparition of the Theatre.⁴⁰

Moreover, while evidence regarding the Red Lion is still lacking in some respects, since further documentation was discovered by Janet Loengard on the plea roll of the Court of the King’s Bench in 1983, there has not been a limited amount of evidence in relation to the building.⁴¹ On the contrary, as Berry points out, it is now the case that ‘[t]he stage at the Red Lion is the only one of the whole period for which all the main dimensions are available’.⁴² Thus while it may still be challenging to speak about dramatic practice at the venue, there is an abundance of detail which could contribute towards an understanding of playhouse architectural development.

The only remaining reason for the Red Lion’s exclusion is that it was short-lived. While this does have considerable bearing on its impact on early modern society and theatrical culture, this does not disqualify it from having existed. Further, the playhouse’s closure seems likely to have been due to legal disputes rather than inadequate commercial appeal for a playhouse in the 1560s or in Mile End, where it was situated.⁴³ That it was financed by John Brayne, the co-builder and co-financier of the Theatre, suggests that the Red Lion did not lead him to conclude that building a playhouse was commercially unviable. Indeed, the considerably larger amount subsequently spent building the Theatre may imply the opposite. Even if this were not the case, failed theatrical venues can reflect as much about the position of theatre as successful ones, and still demonstrate developing theatrical traditions. A specific example from the Red Lion is that it possessed a turret: an astoundingly interesting architectural feature which has

³⁸ Berry, ‘The First Public Playhouses’, pp.35-36.

³⁹ *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, p.380.

⁴⁰ *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, p.380.

⁴¹ NA, KB 27/1229, m. 30 (Hillary Term 11 Elizabeth), cited in Loengard, ‘An Elizabethan Lawsuit’, p.302.

⁴² Berry, ‘The First Public Playhouses’, p.138.

⁴³ Berry, ‘The First Public Playhouses’, p.136.

not been recorded in any subsequent English theatres, and appears to demonstrate a link between medieval theatrical structures and early modern ones.⁴⁴

Loengard was the first to argue for the Red Lion's usurpation of the Theatre as the 'first' playhouse in London. Noting that new evidence about pre-1576 stages has meant 'the traditional understanding of the Theatre's uniqueness has been refined and somewhat eroded', Loengard's discovery of additional evidence about the structure and physical features of the Red Lion in the King's Bench plea roll in 1983 allowed her to demonstrate that it fulfils existing scholarly criteria for recognition as a playhouse, and which have been used to argue for the unique position of the Theatre: it was not an inn, or a conversion of or attachment to a pre-existing building but a newly built and free-standing venue which was intended to be 'permanent'.⁴⁵ While I would query whether it is possible to ascertain whether Brayne intended the Red Lion to be 'permanent' – or even if this is a possible distinction to make – Loengard is correct in noting that this criterion is used by other scholars, and that the Red Lion fulfils those standards.

Nevertheless, the narrative of the Theatre being the first London playhouse is deeply entrenched, and to protect this key tenet of theatre history it has been necessary to denigrate playhouses which rival it, or to provide new criteria that they cannot fulfil. In 1989, several years after the discovery of the evidence in the King's Bench suit, Berry's article 'The First Public Playhouses, Especially the Red Lion' responds to Loengard's challenge to his and other scholars' work in establishing the Theatre as a playhouse 'first'. While he admits that defining the Theatre as the first playhouse is an oversimplification he stands by the label, stating '[t]here are some verities in our business, and this ought to be one of them'.⁴⁶ Appealing to the authority and longevity of existing theatre history narratives to maintain certainty within the discipline is extremely problematic; historical research should re-examine the evidence when necessary and allow new evidence to nuance current understandings.

Berry adds another criterion which specifically challenges the Red Lion, suggesting that as it was cheap to build, and the legal disputes between Brayne and his carpenters do not mention walls or a roof, its status as a playhouse is dubious because 'a proper playhouse ought to be an imposing structure'.⁴⁷ The structural complexity of a playhouse is not a factor which comes into other considerations, and quibbling about the nature of a building seems obstinate: clearly, the Red Lion was a theatrical venue, and questioning its presence in the canon of early modern playhouses because of its *possible* architectural differences to them does not seem

⁴⁴ Berry, 'The First Public Playhouses', p.140.

⁴⁵ Loengard, 'An Elizabethan Lawsuit', p.300; pp.305-306.

⁴⁶ Berry, 'The First Public Playhouses', p.133.

⁴⁷ Berry, 'The First Public Playhouses', p.145.

useful. In fact, Berry's observation that it probably did not have a roof seems of no consequence since that was also the case for the Theatre.

It should also be noted, however, that despite initial resistance to evidence which challenges established narratives of playhouse space and development, new information can subsequently be absorbed and allowed to nuance discussion to some degree. In relation to the Red Lion, Berry does latterly include the evidence regarding to the venue in *English Professional Theatre*, where it appears first in the chronological list of early modern playhouse buildings. However, such correctives can take a long time to take hold, and while Loengard's evidence has been accepted and included in factual overviews, there is still minimal discussion of it in constructions of the development of early modern theatre: its significance does not appear to have been fully understood or unpicked, and the Theatre's position as a 'first' is still relatively unmodified, despite the evidence that has been discovered since this belief was originally formed. In addition to arguing that the Theatre's position and value as a playhouse 'first', and the resulting negative consequences for other playhouses, is severely compromised by the existence of the Red Lion, I have argued that labelling a venue as original or innovative based on limited evidence, or evidence persistently read in a particular way, can unhelpfully bias understanding and create stubbornly persistent 'truths' through which all other evidence is interpreted.

As demonstrated by the apparent importance of the Red Lion being newly built rather than a conversion of an existing building, the construction status of a venue influences its place in the playhouse hierarchy. The prevailing sense is that purpose-built playhouses convey extra status: they are considered to be planned and deliberate rather than happening serendipitously because it was convenient, perhaps with the minimum necessary provisions to make the space ready. As a converted inn, this sense has haunted the Red Bull, as mentions of it invariably refer repeatedly to its former purpose. While this is in part because it helps to visualise the space, the same emphasis is not laid on the public indoor playhouses, which were also converted from pre-existing buildings: Salisbury Court was converted from a barn, both Blackfriars playhouses were rooms in the existing Blackfriars precinct, and the Cockpit had been designed as an animal baiting arena. For the Cockpit especially, these origins seem at least as relevant as those of the Red Bull.

It is possible that class is a factor here, and that entertainment for people from lower social classes has been believed to be more ad hoc and less planned. It may also be because the only playhouses which were newly constructed were other large outdoor venues such as the Theatre, Globe and Fortune. It might be thought that the distinct shape of outdoor playhouses necessitated a purpose-built space, but as the Red Bull demonstrates, building a new circular amphitheatre from scratch was not the only option available for those running large-capacity,

outdoor venues. Moreover, the Fortune was square and evidence from the newly-excavated Curtain site suggests that it too was not *entirely* newly-built, as thought, but walls were erected between existing ones to create a rectangular building which incorporated existing infrastructure.

As such, while ‘converted’ and ‘purpose built’ are often conceived as a binary when considering playhouse space, the reality is a spectrum of origins. Many early modern playhouses were converted to some degree – how much is probably unknowable – but many are not considered to be, while for others this is considered central to their conceptualisation. Emphasis on the origins of playhouse spaces is connected to the concept of ‘permanence’ which is also a determining factor in a venue’s perceived importance.

The concept of permanent playhouses is pervasive: a key factor in determining why interest in English theatre begins at the point it does is because the second half of the sixteenth century saw the introduction of England’s first ‘permanent’ playhouses. I am indebted to Andy Kesson for interrogating the idea of permanence in keynote papers and public talks, as well as in his work on the Before Shakespeare Project.⁴⁸ Kesson highlights that buildings are never permanent, and as such the term creates false and unhelpful distinctions which fuel inaccurate conceptualisations of how important the different venues of the early modern theatre industry were.

When applied to a space, ‘permanent’ partly refers to the length of time the playhouse was in operation. The Red Lion then, is primarily excluded because it was too short-lived. But it is also used to signal that a space had an extensive and consistent theatre history: it had either been purpose-built as a playhouse, or at least fully and extensively converted and used for an extended period. This is one way spaces in the private tradition are excluded, because they were primarily used for another function, and it also extends to the four inns. But the line between venues that still operated as inns and performed plays regularly and an inn like the Red Bull which became solely used as a playhouse, although where beer was still sold to audiences, is difficult to draw. Similarly, venues switched from being a ‘permanent’ playhouse to another function and back to a playhouse again, either in the long or short term. The Hope held animal baiting two days per week, which presumably required some reconfiguration of the stage space. The Curtain seems to have been used for quasi-theatrical entertainments such as prize fights and animal baiting for periods of its existence, and then staged plays again.

This nuance undermines the whole idea of a binary split between permanent and non-permanent, and the fault lines in the idea are especially highlighted in the middle part of the

⁴⁸ ‘Before Shakespeare’, The British Graduate Shakespeare Conference, Shakespeare Institute, Stratford Upon Avon, 4-6 June 2015; ‘The Early Modern Theatrical Scene in London: In Conversation with Prof. Duncan Salkeld and Dr Andy Kesson’, The Rose Playhouse, Park Street London, 11 April 2016.

century, when theatre became an illicit activity. Gibbons' Tennis Court, considered a permanent if short-lived venue, was built as a tennis court in the 1630s, used illicitly as a playhouse during the 1650s while still operating as a tennis court, became the playhouse of the King's Men in 1660, and reverted to use as a tennis court in 1663.⁴⁹ Why is this considered permanent in a way that is distinct from tennis courts on aristocratic estates which also housed performances of plays? There is a difference in the durations and cycles of performance – plays would have been staged for one night in aristocratic households rather than for weeks, months or years, but this may have been the case for Gibbons' during the 1650s. Thus, Gibbons' does not seem to 'count' as permanent until 1660. Even then, Gibbons' status is questioned because its three-year period of regular (that is, almost daily) usage is short enough to be considered transient. This is overcome by the belief that Thomas Killigrew intended to use the space 'permanently', but was compelled to move as part of a theatrical arms race with Davenant.⁵⁰ As such, permanence can also relate to the – usually unknowable and latterly assumed – 'intention' of the impresario when deciding to occupy a playhouse.

This deconstruction of the term 'permanent' has been extremely important to my reconsideration of how early modern theatre space is conceptualised. When playhouses are designated 'permanent' it does not refer exactly to the lifespan of the playhouse, or to whether it was purpose-built – although it is strongly related to both – and thus it is clear that there is no fixed set of criteria by which permanence or impermanence can be judged. Rather, then, designating a playhouse 'permanent' can be used as a shorthand for indicating that a playhouse is considered important: it is part of the canon of early English playhouses. The converse is true for spaces which are not considered permanent: they are marginalised and seen at best as an interesting adjunct to the main narrative. Furthermore, the concept is used to fix the dates at which spaces begin and cease to be interesting for study as theatre spaces, as delineated above in the example of Gibbons' Tennis Court. In the same way, there is a sense that the Cockpit, Salisbury Court and the Red Bull do not count as proper, or permanent, playhouses after 1642, despite repeated use during the 1640s and again in the late 1650s and early 1660s. However, the paradox involved in spaces becoming and ceasing to be 'permanent' demonstrates the inherent flaws in the concept.

Another factor that can skew the perceived importance of an early modern playhouse is the amount of extant evidence relating to it. Understandably, a lack of evidence relating to a space means that the likelihood of research being undertaken on it is reduced, because it is much easier to talk authoritatively about a playhouse which has a number of historical records, lots of references in critical writing, and an extensive and well-preserved repertory. As such, the

⁴⁹ Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), p. 115-119.

⁵⁰ Hotson, *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, pp.248-249.

Rose has more written on it, than, for example, the Hope or the Fortune, in large part due to Henslowe's diary providing direct evidence about its operations, and since its excavation in 1989, the existence of archaeological remains. Moreover, its connections to a number of important companies, including an extensive connection to the Admiral's Men - who Gurr has argued were the other half of a duopoly with the Chamberlain's Men, or 'Shakespeare's Opposites' - has suggested to theatre historians that it is a venue worthy of study and consideration.⁵¹

On the other hand, lack of evidence about venues such as the Curtain, Newington Butts and the Red Lion contribute to their neglect. Availability of evidence has a strong temporal correlation: the earlier the venue the less is likely to be known about it, and thus the less likely it will be considered important in narratives of early modern theatre space. However, the tendency to discuss better recorded playhouses more frequently is undertheorised, and there is no collective responsibility for pointing this out. As such, the bias is self-fuelling: the less scholarly work undertaken on a venue the less important it will seem to those reading histories of early modern theatre, and the less information there is to cite for those who do wish to undertake work on that venue. Indeed, the key difficulty of writing a chapter on the Curtain in this thesis has been due to the lack of evidence and the dearth of scholarly work on the venue to date.

Nevertheless, this imbalance is becoming more widely addressed in early modern scholarship: since beginning this thesis the Before Shakespeare project has been established to unearth information about sixteenth century playhouses, and to argue for their importance in English theatre history. It is acutely aware of the scholarly neglect of these earlier venues: the Before Shakespeare website states that it is

the first project to take seriously the mid-century beginnings of those playhouses, seeing them as mid-Tudor and early Elizabethan phenomena rather than becoming distracted by the second generation of people working in the playhouses, the most famous of whom is William Shakespeare himself. The project asks what happens if we privilege instead the beginnings of those playhouses, thinking about them as entrepreneurial, architectural, and creative innovations and considering the changes they brought about in the way people wrote, performed, watched, and (eventually) read plays.⁵²

Roslyn Knutson corroborates the sense that a lack of evidence is liable to result in a playhouse's neglect in scholarly overviews, noting that '[b]ecause no documents identify company *x* at *y* inn in the 1590s, this venue has not figured prominently in narratives about the

⁵¹ *Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company, 1592-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), see esp. pp.1-5.

⁵² Before Shakespeare Project, *Before Shakespeare: About*, (London, 2016)
<<https://beforeshakespeare.com/about/>> [accessed 7 May 2017]

expansion of the theatrical marketplace after 1593.⁵³ In this instance Knutson notes there has subsequently been a resurgence of interest in inn playing. The catalyst for this change is of particular interest in ascertaining the framework behind the canonisation of playhouse spaces. Two of the three reasons Knutson cites for an increased interest in inn playing are Gurr's suggestion that the Chamberlain's Men played regularly indoors at the Cross Keys during winter and Paul Menzer's argument that the phrase 'in the Cittie' on the title page of *Hamlet* Q1 means that it would have been performed in one of the inns, three of which were within the city wall.⁵⁴

These reasons demonstrate a major problem in scholarly emphasis: interest in early modern playing spaces correlates closely with their connections to Shakespeare, and by extension, to the Chamberlain's and King's Men. If the inns were a venue that Burbage's company had not played in, but other companies that are now more obscure had, they would still be important to the history of early modern theatre - in some ways more so, as companies, plays and venues that did not endure in popularity can tell us as much about what constituted success in the early modern theatre industry as those that did. However, those which did not retain fame for whatever reason - and it must be considered that a sizeable element of chance, and factors other than popularity and perceived aesthetic value, would have been involved - are so much less studied than those which did remain famous. We thus know much less about such companies and plays, and their role in the theatrical landscape. Our retrospective value judgments on the worth of plays that have survived and proved commercially viable are not beneficial for recreating an accurate picture of the early modern theatrical landscape.

Shakespeare's influence on the canonisation of playhouses is difficult to overstate. Many scholarly narratives imply or sometimes explicitly state, that the Globe and the Blackfriars were the key playhouses. These two venues are often still used as the archetypal examples of an indoor and an outdoor playhouse. They are considered the most important and the most popular, innovative venues. This is irrespective of the fact that the Rose was built on Bankside more than ten years before the Globe, or that the Chamberlain's Men had worked in other venues before then, including the Curtain, Cross Keys inn and Theatre. These two playhouses have achieved special status not necessarily due to equivalent impact at the time, but by virtue of being the longest sites of performance for Shakespeare's plays and during what is considered his 'golden' period.

Certainly, the Globe has an important place in theatrical history because of this legacy and the continual focus on it over other early modern playhouses, in both popular and scholarly

⁵³ 'Adult Playing Companies 1593-1603', in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Drama*, ed. by Richard Dutton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.64.

⁵⁴ 'Adult Playing Companies', p.64.

spheres. It is the prototype that is named and used to provide a blueprint when an Elizabethan amphitheatre is recreated. Some of this emphasis is legitimate: the King's Men probably were the most important company of the age, and Shakespeare was certainly a very popular dramatist. But it is undeniable that Shakespeare's ubiquity now is disproportionate to what it was during his lifetime. While the Globe *was* very important, and became even more important historically due to its longevity and connections to Shakespeare and the King's Men, it would be misleading to imply that it was an especially innovative development, or one so significantly distinct from other theatrical venues.

Moreover, the 'Shakespeare effect' extends beyond the preponderance of critical work on the Globe and the Blackfriars, and touches the reputation of every early modern playhouse: all are in some ways defined by the strength of their relationship to Shakespeare. The Theatre features as a 'permanent' first, but also as the first 'proper' home of Shakespeare. The Curtain, as I will discuss more extensively in my case study chapter, has originally been denigrated for having too small a connection to Shakespeare since the Chamberlain's Men were only resident there between 1597/8-1599, but interest has surged since its discovery and excavation, and it has been imbued with new worth by being re-defined as 'Shakespeare's Lost Playhouse'. Outdoor playhouses without a strong connection to Shakespeare have generally slid into obscurity, and are most often mentioned in relation to a useful piece of extant evidence that can be used to infer something about early modern playhouses more generally, such as de Witt's drawing of the Swan.

The vastly different volume of work produced on the various playhouses has created an echo chamber in which criticism has continued to prioritise certain playhouses, and use them to exemplify early modern theatres generally. While many individual pieces of critical work are not biased, collectively the body of work on early modern theatrical spaces and their importance is skewed. However, there is growing awareness that certain playhouses are understudied, and some critics have in recent years been redressing this balance by writing on lesser-discussed theatres. I hope to contribute towards and further this re-evaluation of early modern theatrical space by considering how and why canonisation takes place and proposing alternative criteria by which it could be possible to establish the importance of these playhouses. This framework will then be applied practically to some neglected early modern playhouses in my case studies of the Curtain, Salisbury Court and Gibbons' Tennis Court.

So far, I have discussed the factors which commonly determine whether playhouses are considered central or marginal to the early modern theatre industry. I have argued that this hierarchisation is based on: the socio-economic heterogeneity or exclusivity of the audience; if it is considered innovative or the first of a 'type' of playhouses; whether it was purpose-built or converted; the amount of extant primary evidence and scholarly research relating to it; whether

it is considered 'permanent' based on the length of time it was used as a playhouse and whether it had other simultaneous uses; and the strength of its connection to Shakespeare.

One of the aims of this thesis is to question and disrupt these criteria for canonisation. I do not wish to claim that we cannot make distinctions about the different kinds of playhouses that existed, or that early modern individuals and society did not do this: certainly they did. But I argue that we need to thoroughly re-examine narratives of various playhouses' importance, and to assess the reasons why scholars of early modern drama might have a vague impression that the Theatre was more important than the Hope, the Rose more important than the Curtain, the Cockpit more important than St Paul's. Only with such a re-evaluation will it be possible to see which of these claims are valid, and founded on convincing evidence, and which have been skewed by an inaccurate emphasis on the superiority and centrality of Shakespeare: a view which was not that of the seventeenth century, but of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth. It does not necessarily need to be that of the twenty-first.

Many attempts have been made by historians in the last half a century to produce social historiographies, and to focus on the lived experiences of the vast majority of populations, rather than the atypical experiences of the rich and powerful. It is notoriously difficult to do this, as evidence frequently relates to people from the latter social strata, and partly for this reason many narratives focus on the macro-political and extant interactions of the well off. The main population are more often considered as a mass than individually, perhaps because the comparatively negligible amount of detailed and extensive evidence about their lives makes it hard to do otherwise.

All of this also applies to early modern theatregoers, and while only one of the three theatres that I consider in depth in this thesis has suffered in its reputation as a populist venue, I propose that large outdoor theatres which saw decades of performances to thousands of people ought to be seen as interesting, respected and as worthy of study as intimate, expensive performance spaces for hundreds from the upper echelons. This remains the case even if the plays from the former venues are now considered inaccessible and literarily unsophisticated, and those from the latter continue to align to our current notions of aesthetic and literary value.

2. Assessing the Importance of an Early Modern Playhouse

As discussed in the last section, while widely varying amounts of work have been produced on different early modern playhouses, this does not necessarily correlate with the importance of the venues, but has led to a misrepresentative picture of the early modern theatrical landscape. Having suggested that the current factors which lead to canonisation are limiting and often faulty, it is necessary to consider frameworks by which it is possible to assess the value and impact of the venues, both in their contemporary moment and now. This section will consider alternative ways in which the impact of playhouses could be quantified, and propose that these are: the length of time it operated as a playhouse; the length of time it stood as a building; the popularity of the plays performed there and their subsequent historical impact; and the playhouse's theatrical and architectural innovations.

Consideration of these features should be collective: rather than the less explicit process of hierarchy which has developed piecemeal, the first two factors aim to look objectively at directly comparable data across a large number of playhouses. For the latter two factors I suggest that rather than creating a hierarchy based on these observations it is more important to seek impact and innovation for each individual playhouse, foregrounding their important, unique places in the theatre industry. Indeed, I conclude by suggesting that while these approaches are useful for comparing collectively the existence and development of early modern playhouse space, creating a hierarchy of value between playhouses is probably not a possible or desirable feat. As such, I suggest that an inclusive and descriptive approach is more useful than one which categorises and ranks the playhouses' importance.

Length of time as a playhouse

One way of defining the significance of a playhouse is to consider the length of time it operated for. The longer a playhouse existed, the more impact it is likely to have had on the architectural, topographical and phenomenological experiences of Londoners. This is distinct from the idea of 'permanence' that I have critiqued in the previous section, as this concept tends only to discount the importance of short-lived or converted playhouses, or those which are considered to have been transient due to the presumed 'intention' of the manager. A reconsideration of the number of years performances occurred for at each playhouse, should not be used to discount venues as insignificant, but perhaps can imbue certain other venues with more importance than they are currently ascribed. Longevity gives some indication of the traces, memories and phenomenological impact that a performance space would have had on society. As such, if a playhouse was functional for a long period of time it would have had a large impact in this sense.

The length of time a playhouse operated for also goes some way to signalling the number of individuals who viewed performances at each playhouse, which would be an extremely useful quantitative measure of the venue's impact, and a good indicator of the extent of the playhouse's cultural dissemination. Such a metric would address concerns regarding the impact of class on perceived importance by giving equal weight to each individual viewing.

Unfortunately, the capacity of the various playhouses, combined with an absence of evidence regarding how often and consistently playhouses were used across their lifespan – including, for example, during the Commonwealth – means that these numbers cannot be ascertained with anything approaching useful accuracy.

As Gurr has pointed out, estimates of playhouse capacity for outdoor venues often seem to cluster suspiciously around 3000, and as such attempting to multiply capacity by length of time operating would just reflect the length of time the playhouse operated and whether the venue was indoor or outdoor. The varying popularities of the houses is another complicating factor which cannot be accounted for over an extended period: Ann Jennalie Cook has estimated that venues were half full on average, but this is derived from records of payment in Henslowe's Diary, which only relates to the Rose playhouse from June 1594 - July 1597; the percentage could be very different in other years and playhouses, especially as Thomas Platter was likely to be correct when noting that the acting troupes 'which play best obtain most spectators', and thus would have filled a different percentage of their house.⁵⁵ Thus, while the total number of viewings or spectators would be an excellent indicator of impact, the length of playhouse operation may have to serve as a substitute indicator of what this could have been.

Moreover, a playhouse being commercially viable for an extended period demonstrates that it was considered relevant by early modern society. It is reasonable to assume that longevity meant that a venue had enough reputation and significance within the theatrical landscape to remain marketable: an unprofitable playhouse would eventually be abandoned. However, while continued existence demonstrates at least a basic level of financial success, the same presumption should not be made in reverse. A playhouse closing does not necessarily indicate a lack of success: it could be due to fire, death of key members of the company, legal or property disputes, or a multitude of reasons other than commercial failure.

Longevity is a factor that is sometimes considered in scholarship, but often it serves to trivialise playhouses already considered unimportant because they were short-lived – sometimes to the point where they are considered not to have been 'permanent'. Visualising the longevity of a wide group of playhouses provides a more comprehensive consideration of how much they would have impacted on the theatre industry by simply being present within it.

⁵⁵ *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp.190-191; *Travels in England, 1599*, trans. by Clare Williams (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), p.167.

However, it should be noted that the number of years a playhouse operated for is not always precisely determinable, as often there is inconclusive evidence about the dates at which performances started and ended. The graph below (Figure 1) depicts the number of years from the start date to the end date of performance, as recorded in *English Professional Theatre*, and as such does not account for intermissions in playing, either generally due to plague closure or Lent, or for each playhouse due to the individual circumstances.⁵⁶ For now, in order to provide a useful point of comparison with previous scholarly discussion, the latest end date in all cases is taken to be 1642 for playhouses which began before then. Similarly, playhouses which began after 1642 have dates for which they are conventionally considered to open at: the years when they were officially occupied by the King's or the Duke's Men. This is to present the data as it is ordinarily considered, but as I will discuss in the next chapter the ways in which the standardised imposition of this endpoint is misleading and reductive.⁵⁷ For now, however, it is useful to have a visual representation of the data as it is normally considered.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ This slightly broad-brush approach is fairer and more accurate than attempting to approximate how long each playhouse was not in use for across the period. As evidence is vague in many of these instances, and does not exist in others, attempting such an approximation would inevitably be inaccurate.

⁵⁷ It will also be apparent that ordinarily it would be unusual to include any playhouses built after 1642 in this sort of consideration. However, I have included those which were built before my end date of 1670, as this thesis argues for the productivity and relevance of including later early modern playhouses in discussion.

⁵⁸ Similarly, the Rose has been considered as one playhouse, despite the extensive architectural changes made to the building between February and April 1592, because scholarship refers to it as such the majority of the time, unlike the Globe and Fortune theatres. In addition, while it is difficult to draw definitive and binary distinctions between a spectrum of alteration from complete rebuilding to minor changes which would have taken place frequently at all venues, as the period of time between the first and second Rose structures was only three months, compared to a year between Globes, and seemingly just over a year between the two Fortunes, it seems likely that the material difference was not as striking, nor the change to public perception as notable.

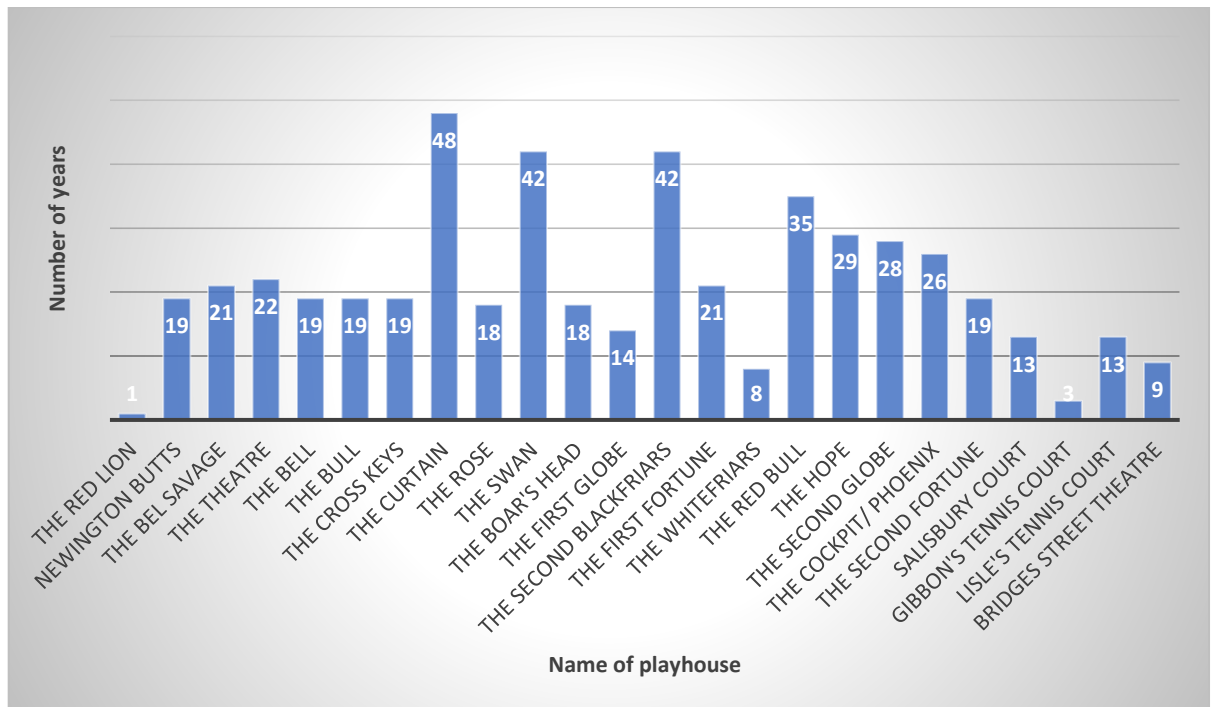


Figure 1. Graph to show the number of years early modern playhouses operated for, according to conventional scholarly definition and with venues of the same name considered separately.

When the playhouses' performance lives are considered numerically and in comparison to each other, venues such as the Curtain and the Swan become foregrounded as having had a significant impact. The Curtain's longevity is striking: 48 years in comparison to the next longest, which is the Swan at 42 years. The Swan is sometimes mentioned in relation to the De Witt sketch, but is generally considered unimportant: White suggests that 'Langley's playhouse has achieved greater distinction in our time than it seems to have done in its own, mainly because of the drawing de Witt made of its interior'.⁵⁹ As will be noted in Chapter 3, there is very little scholarly work on the Curtain, and no monographs have been written on either venue. On the other hand, usually prominent playhouses such as the Rose, the Theatre and the first Globe seem far less significant. However, the short life span of the first Globe flags up that the longevity of a playhouse is slightly more complex, as although the first and second Globe were different buildings, it is unclear whether they should be considered as one playhouse or two. This also applies to the first and second Fortune. The second Globe was built on the same foundations as the first, and so it is generally thought that the size and shape of the auditorium would have remained the same, although an adjoining building for

⁵⁹ 'London Professional Playhouses and Performances' in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre: Vol. 1: Origins to 1660*, ed. by Jane Milling and Peter Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p.314.

refreshments was also constructed meaning that the entire complex became larger.⁶⁰ Despite having the same foundations, it is possible that the two theatres were substantially different. They certainly had some significantly different features: the second Globe had a tiled, rather than a thatched roof, for example. As the shareholders notoriously spent such a great deal of money on building the second Globe, ‘vastly more than their lease required’, it was probably more impressive than the first, otherwise it is unclear how and why the extra money was spent.⁶¹

Indeed, while architectural alterations are important for physical playhouse development, they do not necessarily imply a change in the playhouse as a conceptual entity. In both cases, another playhouse was erected on the same spot immediately after the accidental destruction of the previous one, and retained the same name. In the half century that the Curtain was operating as a playhouse, there would have been changes and repairs undertaken on the building, which may have led to vast aesthetic alterations. In the same way that most cells in the human body are replaced over the course of seven years but we still conceive of ourselves and others as the same person from birth to death, we could not suggest that the Curtain became a different venue over the course of those changes, because it happened slowly.

Moreover, the cessation in theatrical activity in between the iterations of the playhouses was a year and three months for the Fortune and less than a year for the Globe, which is not enough for the connection to be lost in people’s memories. There were many other breaks in theatre production for periods such as lent and outbreaks of plague, which were occasionally of a similar length to this fissure. As such, if we conceive of both Globe and Fortune theatres as the same imaginative entities, as illustrated in Figure 2, the results are slightly different, and a trend develops of the outdoor theatres clustering around the forty-year mark.

⁶⁰ *Professional Theatre*, p.607; p.610. For a succinct discussion of why it is sometimes claimed that the first Globe was smaller than the second, see Gurr, ‘Why the Globe is Famous’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Richard Dutton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.193.

⁶¹ *Professional Theatre*, p.609.

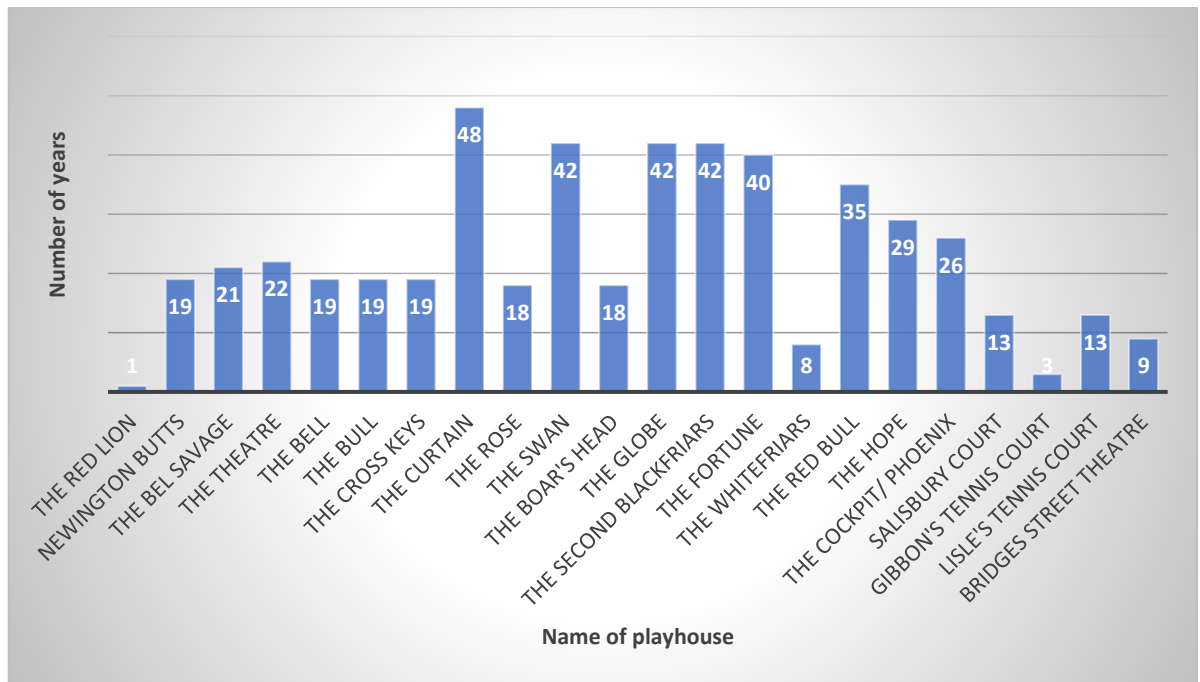


Figure 2. Graph to show the number of years early modern playhouses operated for, according to conventional scholarly definition and with venues of the same name considered as one.

However, the next chapter will argue against the use of 1642 as a convenient date of cessation for theatrical venues: there was considerably more overlap between the first and second halves of the seventeenth-century theatres than usually thought, and some playhouses were still in operation – albeit sporadically – during the 1640s, 1650s and 1660s. For further evidence and justification of these playhouses' activity during these years, see Chapter 2. While I do not claim that playhouses performed with the same frequency and consistency during this time as they did prior to 1642, I contend that they performed regularly enough to still be conceptually considered as playing spaces. The entire length between first and last recorded performances in playhouse spaces can be recorded as demonstrated in Figure 3.

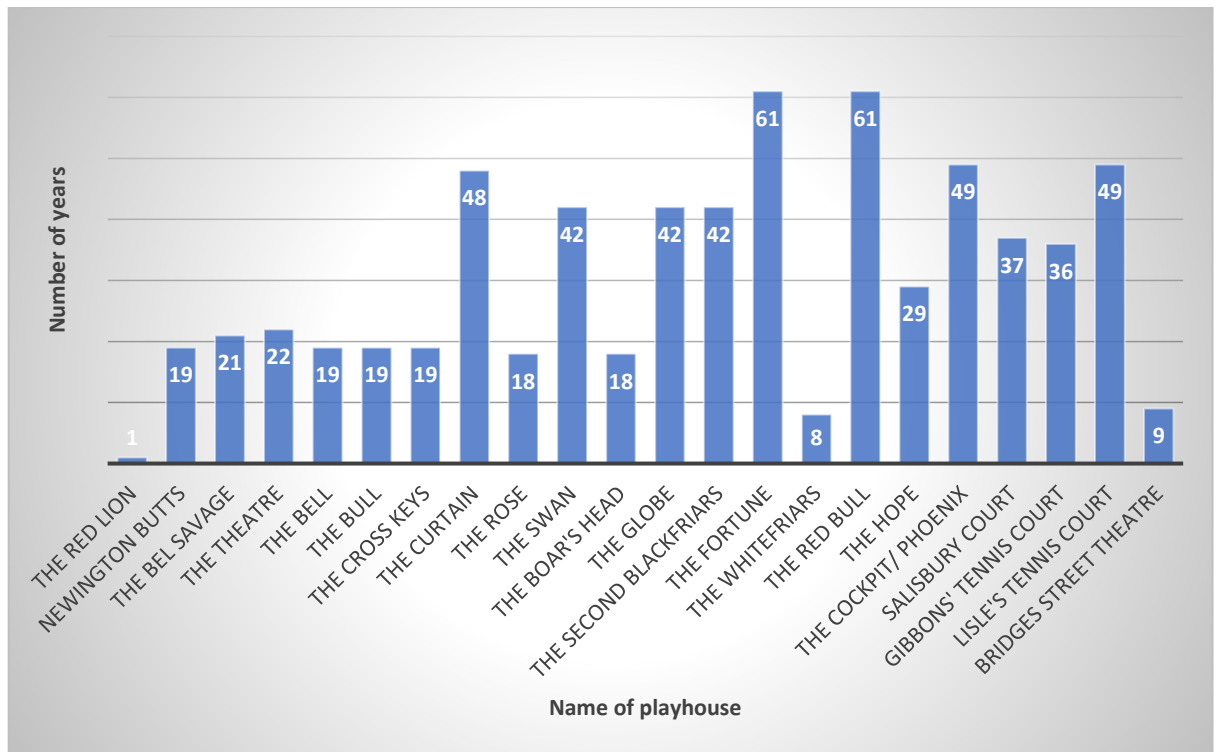


Figure 3. Graph to show number of years early modern playhouses operated from first to last recorded performance.

Rather than showing an accurate representation of the playhouses' lifespans, this calculation probably skews reality too far in the other direction: a true representation is probably somewhere in the middle. But these ambiguities demonstrate the difficulty of determining rigidly when a space is or is not a playhouse. The early modern theatre industry was complex, organic and messy in its origins and development, and these various iterations of the data demonstrate the complexity and fluidity of a venue's status as a playhouse.

Entire lifespan of the building

This thesis addresses not only active playhouses, but also the continuity of theatrical practice, space and memory: as such it is pertinent to consider not just the time that the venues were operating as performance spaces, but their entire existence as buildings. Frequently, playhouse spaces are only of concern in historiography while they were active, but I suggest that this can be augmented by considering the existence of the buildings before and after their lives as theatrical venues. What the buildings were subsequently used for can throw new light on the place theatrical buildings held in early modern society, and moreover, ascertain whether buildings retain traces of their past uses, both physically and through individual and collective memory.

The use of the Red Bull, Salisbury Court and the Cockpit/ Phoenix as theatrical venues after the Restoration demonstrates that memories about buildings' pasts endure for a considerable amount of time. While the spaces may have been convenient due to their architectural suitability as performance spaces, this would not have been the only consideration in choosing to use them: their occupiers would also have been trading on the fact that they were remembered as places of performance by a significant percentage of the population. This may have been augmented by the ongoing illicit performances at these venues throughout the wars and Commonwealth, but for Samuel Pepys at least, who had spent much of that period outside of London, returning to these venues for the first time since the wars was a noteworthy occurrence.⁶² When spectating at the Red Bull, Pepys recalls that he had not been there 'since plays come up again' (23 March 1661), and his visit to Salisbury Court is 'the first time I ever was there since plays begun' (29 January 1661), although no such mention is made on his first recorded visit to the Cockpit, which was a few months earlier on 11 October 1660.⁶³ Whether this was because he had been there to see performances in the 1650s, he had been there for a purpose other than playgoing, or simply neglected to mention that this was his first visit is uncertain. Nevertheless, the previous two houses demonstrate that for Pepys these spaces retained the memory of their former purpose, despite the fact he had been just nine years old when the civil wars began.⁶⁴

As such, the table below (Figure 4) demonstrates the point at which the playhouse buildings were constructed, or in the case of playhouses assembled in pre-existing buildings, converted, and when the building was destroyed. It is not always easy to establish exactly the

⁶² C. S. Knighton, 'Pepys, Samuel (1633–1703)', in *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, (2015) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/21906>

⁶³ *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. by Robert Latham and William Matthews, 11 vols (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1970–83).

⁶⁴ Knighton, 'Pepys, Samuel'.

longevity of the playhouse buildings. In most instances, I have followed the date or date range provided in *English Professional Theatre*, or for the later playhouses which fall outside the remit of the volume, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*. The start date refers to when the buildings were first conceived of as playing spaces, either by design or by use. In many cases this refers to when the playhouse was built (which is occasionally a slightly earlier date than when it was first actually in operation as a playhouse), but in some cases it refers to when the space was first used theatrically, even though it existed as a building with a different purpose beforehand. For playhouses which were first used by children's companies and then by adult companies, the date at which the children's performances began is used, as the space became a playhouse at this point.

As will be apparent, many of the buildings do not have a definite end year, as when they were destroyed or rebuilt beyond recognition is not known. In instances where this is unknown I have used the year of the last reference to the building and then '+', indicating that it was later than this. For those playhouses where it is known that they were destroyed *by* a certain date I have put a date range between the last recorded date of existence and the date at which the building had gone: this range is sometimes large. Use of a '?' indicates that the building was *probably* demolished in this year, but that the reliability of the evidence is questionable.

As with the length of playhouse usage above, these uncertainties show that this metric should not be used to produce conclusions that are excessively precise or inflexible. Even if clear dates were provided for each, the value of each playhouse would not be directly proportionate to the length of time the building existed for. Nevertheless, considering this data provides a useful insight into the tangible *presence* of the playhouses, which is rarely dwelt on. Adding to this, the relatively frequent pieces of evidence which demonstrate that people remembered the building, or even the site, had once been used for playing, even though it was decades or sometimes centuries after performances had stopped, highlights the extraordinary impact that playhouses had.

Playhouse	Date built	Date demolished	Life of building (years)
The Red Lion	1567	1568?	1?
Newington Butts	1575	1594-1599	19-24
The Bel Savage	1575	1666	91
The Theatre	1576	1598	22
The Bell	1577	1666	89
The Bull	1577	1866	289
The Cross Keys	1577	1666	89
The Curtain	1577	1698+	121+
The Rose	1587	1622+	35+
The Swan	1595	1637+	42+
The Boar's Head	1598	1616	18
The first Globe	1599	1613	14
The second Blackfriars	1596	1666	70
The first Fortune	1600	1621	21
The Whitefriars	1606	?	?
The Red Bull	1605	1666+	61+
The Hope	1613	1642-1663	29-60
The second Globe	1614	1644-1655	30-41
The Cockpit/ Phoenix	1616	1665+	49+
The second Fortune	1622	1661-1819+	39-197+
Salisbury Court	1629	1666	37
Gibbons' Tennis Court	1633	1809?	176?
Lisle's Tennis Court	1656	1714	58
Bridges Street Theatre	1663	1672	9

Figure 4. Chart to show dates of construction, demolition and lifespan of playhouse buildings

Popularity, cultural significance and influence on theatrical development

The popularity of the plays performed at each venue is a valuable way of judging the importance of an early modern playhouse and its cultural and theatrical impact, but discerning it is difficult. Peter Kirwan highlights the inherent complexity of ascertaining popularity because of the two modes of consumption: theatregoing and reading. Assessing the popularity of the printed mode is far easier – although by no means unproblematic – as ‘little quantitative evidence survives to help us ascertain the popularity of plays before they reached print’.⁶⁵ Indeed, it is possible that popularity in performance and print could almost be opposites, if it is true that many plays were only printed after they ceased to be commercially viable on the stage.⁶⁶

As such, many plays that appear to have been ‘blockbuster’ successes in the early modern period are not necessarily those which have fared well in the canonisation of early modern drama. As just a handful of examples, *Tamburlaine* at the Rose, *A Game at Chess* at the Globe and *The Sparagus Garden* at Salisbury Court were all phenomenally popular and lucrative when they were first performed. Much recent work has rethought the popularity of various works and authors, including those which are excluded or marginalised in the literary canon; such work frequently attempts to decentre the extent to which Shakespeare is presumed to be dominant. Andy Kesson has argued for the extraordinary popularity of Lyly in the early part of the English theatre industry, stating that it is ‘difficult to overstate Lyly’s impact on early modern culture’ and that he ‘became the most famous writer in his own time’, despite his subsequent neglect and marginalisation due to the promotion of Shakespeare as a peerless national hero.⁶⁷

Developing on this trend of rethinking the cultural importance of early modern drama and playwrights, I suggest it is relevant to consider the playhouses in which audiences would have been viewing these extraordinarily popular plays: flocking to see a particular play would, in lived experience, have involved travelling to a particular building as well. It is highly likely that the playhouse would for some people become associated with that play, or that kind of play, based on memories of watching it there.

Nevertheless, this does not resolve the problem in establishing the popularity of plays in performance, and there is no reliable quantitative measure which could be used to judge between them. Kirwan notes that ‘theatrical popularity cannot be quantified or objectively construed, but is [...] a transitory and changing phenomenon that is partially reflected by,

⁶⁵ ‘Mucedorus’ in *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England*, ed. by Andy Kesson and Emma Smith (Ashgate: Farnham, 2013), p.223.

⁶⁶ Kirwan, ‘Mucedorus’, p.223.

⁶⁷ *John Lyly and Early Modern Authorship* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p.3; p.5.

rather than entirely constructed within, the print market'.⁶⁸ Thus, individual plays and repertoires must be judged, and evidence collated, on a case by case basis. In keeping with my suggestion that creating a comprehensive hierarchy is not as important as reviving neglected aspects of the early modern theatrical world, it is not necessary to compare popularity comprehensively across the range of playhouses: establishing what a playhouse was popular for, or the successes that it did have, might be enough to gain a valuable insight into both its influence and unique appeal.

Nevertheless, the later legacies of playhouses and their plays must also be acknowledged; despite what may be faulty or random mechanisms for deciding the impact of a play, the results of this still effect their subsequent and ongoing cultural impact. The impact the Globe in particular has had is real, even if this is in part due to an overemphasis on Shakespeare's importance. The narratives that have been created after the seventeenth century, including those in the present day, still represent the significance of a particular playhouse space. Indeed, the numerous reconstructions and interpretations of the Globe theatre around the world demonstrates the enormous cultural impact of that playhouse now, even though it may be disproportionate to what it was in the early modern period.⁶⁹ To some lesser degree, this may also be the case for Blackfriars, which has a replica in Staunton, Virginia; the Rose, as a composite reconstruction based on various early modern playhouses has been named after it in Twin Lake, Michigan; and the Fortune, which is the subject of a replica which opened in Australia in 1964.⁷⁰ The difficult task is to separate the evaluation and significance of plays and playhouses in later years from their importance at the time.

Innovation in architecture and repertory

The perception that a playhouse is either innovative or derivative is a criterion that has been used to determine its importance, and I have critiqued how this concept has been applied during a faulty canonisation process. Nevertheless, markers of innovation, development and difference, both in terms of their architectural presence and repertoires, *are* important ways of distinguishing between playhouses. I propose that these concepts can be noted without entrenching questionable or oversimplified narratives. Almost all venues are unique in some

⁶⁸ 'Mucedorus', p.234.

⁶⁹ See, for example, the following Globe interpretations in Argentina, Germany, Italy, Japan and the USA: Teatro Shakespeare, *The Shakespeare Theatre* <<http://teatroshakespeare.com/?lang=en>>; Shakespeare Festival Germany, *The Globe* (2018) <<https://www.shakespeare-festival.de/en/globe/its-all-shakespeare-the-globe--85/>>; Globe Theatre Roma, *The Theatre* <<http://www.globetheatreroma.com/>>; The Tokyo Globe (2018) <<https://www.tglobe.net/>>; The Old Globe, *Theatres* (2017) <<https://www.theoldglobe.org/plan-your-visit/theatres/theater-details-page/>>

⁷⁰ American Shakespeare Centre, *Blackfriars Playhouse* (2017) <<http://www.americanshakespearecenter.com/pages/187/0/blackfriars-playhouse>> [accessed 3 May 2017]; Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, *Majors, Theatre* (2017) <<https://bluelake.org/summercamp/majors/theater.php>>; University of Western Australia, *New Fortune Theatre* (2014) <<http://www.theatres.uwa.edu.au/venues/fortune>>

way, but it is important to be cautious against overemphasising the innovation of one space to the detriment of others: for example, as I have already argued, claims of the Theatre's innovation have been to the detriment of other playhouses built and operating at the same time. Thus, while innovation can be a useful marker of importance, it is key to ensure that the discussion is nuanced and considers the unique and individual features that can be attributed to all playhouses. Rather than denigrating some playhouses for failing to be original, even if the evidence to support this is suspect or incomplete, I suggest an approach which broadly considers that all early modern playhouses had their own unique identities and thus were innovative in different ways.

This method is not intended to be unrealistically positive and indiscriminate, but is based on the idea that the rise of playhouse buildings was an extraordinary new phenomenon, for which there was no set blueprint. The differences between playhouses were notable, and in the next section of this chapter I will argue against the excessive homogenisation of playhouse 'types', which often problematically situates 'key' playhouses such as the Theatre, the Globe and the second Blackfriars as archetypes.

Therefore, I suggest it is more productive to ascertain unique features and differences between all playhouses. The case studies in this thesis will suggest innovative and individual features were particularly associated with the playhouses discussed and argue that this was part of their unique reputations and impact. Innovative aspects of playhouses must be weighed on a detailed and individual basis: there is no simple marker by which it would be possible to effectively or accurately compare them. Nevertheless, each venue should be valued for the innovative drama, style or architectural features they introduced, and while innovation is not necessarily a metric which I would advocate using to assess the importance of one playhouse against another, it is one which does demonstrate their distinct individual worth.

Conclusion

In conclusion, playhouses can be reappraised based on a different set of criteria to the ones that have hitherto been used in the canonisation process. These could include the length of time that the venue operated as a playhouse and remained standing as a building, the approximate number of spectators throughout its life, how popular and influential the plays performed there were and any innovations it produced in architecture or repertory. Some of these aspects are similar to those that I have critiqued in my description of how playhouses are currently canonised – for example, the idea of theatrical or architectural innovation, or cultural legacy – the latter of which would unquestionably necessitate a focus on the Globe and other playhouses associated with Shakespeare. Innovation and legacy are valid considerations that ought to be considered, but it is beneficial to acknowledge that much of this cultural impact

may be a later phenomenon. This does not mean that cultural impact should be discounted, but that caution should be taken against anachronistically overextending it in the early modern context.

However, while these criteria are the ones I will apply in my analysis of neglected playhouse spaces, I also propose that establishing the playhouses' differing levels of importance, and therefore a hierarchy between them, should not be the primary aim of theatre historiography. It would be better to value all playhouses as historical entities, and redirect our energies to making connections between their theatrical practices, rather than creating a hierarchy that will always remain problematic. These metrics for judging importance can perhaps help to discern how venues related to each other and how the industry as a whole appeared to early modern individuals. But all playing spaces are important to understanding the development of the theatrical landscape, and it is important not to disproportionately focus on some over others. The key purpose of these alternative metrics is to provide a framework for arguing that the more neglected playhouses are also worthy of study and attention, and have been neglected unfairly. This framework aims to promote a more objective sifting of the information rather than deferring to the undertheorized hierarchy of playhouse space which has evolved.

3. Outdoor and Indoor Public Playhouses

The shift from outdoor to indoor playhouses across the period

Perhaps the most notable way that playhouses developed architecturally across the early modern period was the transition from being housed in outdoor spaces to indoor ones. At the turn of the seventeenth century all the commercial London playhouses, except those used by children's companies, were open-air spaces: The Curtain, The Rose, The Globe, The Swan, The Boar's Head and the newly-built Fortune. Indeed, the external spatial origins of commercial (as distinct from courtly or private) English playing can be clearly viewed in a Precept from 1569, which addresses those whose 'houses, yards, courts or gardens, or other place or places' have been used to perform plays or interludes.⁷¹

But although no new amphitheatres were built after 1623, when the second Fortune was built to replace its predecessor, the movement towards indoor playhouses was not as linear and immediate as it has been perceived. Keith Sturges suggests that while the outdoor playhouse 'was not defunct', the indoor playhouses built in 1616 and 1629 'belonged to the new spirit of playhouse design'.⁷² But this risks an anachronistic application of the range of theatre spaces much later in the century. The Hope, Fortune and Globe were all still operating successfully until 1642, and the Red Bull continued through the civil wars and briefly in the Restoration. Moreover, in July 1620 James I authorised an 'arena in London much larger in size and vastly more ambitious in its prospectus than anything contemplated hitherto'.⁷³ This large outdoor theatre was never built, although 'persistent efforts [were] made to realise it between 1620 and 1635'.⁷⁴ A character in *Holland's Leaguer* (1632) alludes to a 'Plot of Architecture, and erecting/ New Amphitheaters, to draw the custome/ From Play-houses'.⁷⁵ Whether this referenced this particular playhouse, a different scheme, or is fictional, it suggests that a commercially competitive outdoor playhouse was still highly feasible. Additionally, Davenant obtained a license in 1639 for a large playhouse in Fleet Street near Salisbury Court and the Blackfriars. The license does not specify whether it was intended to have a roof or not, although Bentley suggests not, noting that the evidence 'implies a large house, not a small private theatre like Blackfriars or the Salisbury Court'.⁷⁶ While the location suggests it was more likely to be a playhouse conceptualised as 'private', the fact that it was clearly going to be constructed from scratch adds weight to it being an outdoor playhouse, as no indoor venues had been purpose-built before. These references to aborted outdoor playhouses during the 1630s demonstrate

⁷¹ CLRO, Journal XIX, fo. 143b; Letter Book v, fo.125, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.58.

⁷² *Jacobean Private Theatre*, p.4.

⁷³ Wickham, *Early English Stages*, II, p.90.

⁷⁴ Wickham, *Early English Stages*, II, p.91.

⁷⁵ Shackerley Marmyon, *Hollands Leaguer* (London: I.B. for Iohn Grove, 1632), sig. E1^v.

⁷⁶ *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, p.306.

that the way events transpired are not proof that there was no possibility of an alternative, or that outdoor playhouses had ceased to be a commercial possibility.

Thus, while indoor playhouses for adult companies began to open in the seventeenth century and dominated the theatrical market by the early 1660s, they did not immediately irradiate outdoor playhouses, or mean that they became old-fashioned in style. Nevertheless, critical focus tends to move towards the indoor theatres from around the start of Charles I's reign if not earlier, which implies that outdoor theatres were by this point an irrelevance or relic. This perception reads the future trajectory of English theatre back onto the mid-seventeenth century, and perhaps creates a shift that was not as pronounced in actuality or as people experienced it.

The terminology of theatre space and the 'public' and 'private' division

The terms 'private' and 'public' theatres have often been used to refer to indoor and outdoor theatres respectively, both in the early modern period and in later scholarship on the period. However, as I have argued, the Cockpit, Salisbury Court and the second Blackfriars were not 'private' theatres, despite being referred to regularly as such on title pages. They were commercial spaces that were open to the public for a fee. They were smaller, more expensive and thus generally had a wealthier and more elite audience, but they still operated as commercial ventures. Thus, as previously discussed, this thesis defines a public playhouse as one where an entrance fee can be paid to gain admission.

Of course, there is a broad distinction that needs to be made between the two different kinds: clearly this distinction was made in the early modern period, and to erase it completely would be to deny an obvious way in which playhouses were conceptualised at the time. Yet it should be noted that uncritical adoption of these terms without querying them has played into and reinforced the faulty narrativisation about the wide gulf in taste and style between the two kinds, which has led to dismissiveness about all cultural production and innovation at outdoor playhouses, often with the exception of the Globe. For example, *Jacobean Private Theatre* states that '[t]he private playhouses [left] the public houses, like the Fortune and the Red Bull, to provide popular theatre for a 'down-market' clientele' but '[a]lone of the public houses, the Globe, by virtue of the high reputation of the King's Men and their plays, might continue to attract something of a heterogeneous audience'.⁷⁷

As such, the use of the terms 'public' and 'private' in scholarship have, in part, contributed towards the oversimplified canonisation of early modern playhouse space. Butler argues that the fundamental distinction between kinds of theatre in the 1630s and early 1640s was between 'drama written principally for the court and [...] non-courtly stages – both 'public'

⁷⁷ Keith Sturges, *Jacobean Private Theatre* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987)

and ‘private’.⁷⁸ For instance, while noting that open-air playhouses generally had repertoires which catered to older, nostalgic tastes, Butler points out that ‘[t]he Phoenix demonstrably kept a high proportion of old plays current in its repertoire in the 1630s’, and that there are ‘surprisingly few new titles associated with’ Salisbury Court.⁷⁹ In addition to contending that the dramatic style of indoor and outdoor playhouses was not as polarised as often suggested, Butler’s use of inverted commas around the designations ‘public’ and ‘private’ demonstrate qualms about the usefulness of these terms. This terminology is now widely recognised in critical reflection as problematic: responding to the problem, *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London* suggests that ‘amphitheatre’ and ‘hall’ are equivalents which are more accurate than ‘public’ and ‘private’.⁸⁰ In some ways these designations are useful: they are more descriptive and seem to allude to the kind of space the playhouses were and the physical features they had, rather than just whether they were open to the elements or not. However, the problem with these terms is that they only refer to the architectural features of *some* indoor and outdoor playhouses – mainly the Globe and Blackfriars – despite being applied to all of them. This prioritisation exemplifies the problem that has been discussed in the previous sections, whereby evidence for one playhouse, which is presumed to be an archetypal example, is extended to apply to every other playhouse contained within a particular group. For example, the chapter on Salisbury Court will demonstrate how presumptions about the playhouse have been made based on information about the Blackfriars, which has both prevented it forming a distinct identity of its own, and has frequently caused it to be considered lacking, because it is being judged by a standard based on the Blackfriars, and been found to fall short. For this reason, to re-evaluate how playhouses are considered in relation to each other it is important to address the terminology used to group and describe them.

The term ‘hall’ appears to only be an appropriate descriptor for the Blackfriars: its adoption would erode the unique architectural identities of the later Cockpit/Phoenix and Salisbury Court. While the term may be designed to reflect the kinds of spaces that the playhouses became once they were fitted up for performance, it is not irrelevant that the Cockpit was an arena for cockfights, while Salisbury Court was converted from a barn.⁸¹ These origins are not in any sense the ‘hall’ that could rightly be ascribed to the Parliament chamber of the Blackfriars precinct.⁸² But more than just relating to the Blackfriars rather than the other public playhouses for adult companies, this term draws too strong a connection with truly

⁷⁸ *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p.4.

⁷⁹ *Theatre and Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p.183, p.184.

⁸⁰ Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*, pp.13-31.

⁸¹ Francis Teague, ‘The Phoenix and the Cockpit-In-Court Playhouses’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Richard Dutton, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.240-241; Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, p.89.

⁸² Paul Menzer, ed., *Inside Shakespeare: Essays on the Blackfriars Stage* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2006), p.9.

private theatrical performances: those which took place in the halls of the aristocracy. The homogenising aspect of this terminology is suspect for two reasons. Firstly, architecturally the spaces were not necessarily similar aside from both being indoors: the public playhouses were constructed in the interior to seat hundreds of people, and had backstage areas, *frons scenae* specifically constructed for the playhouse, musicians' galleries, and probably traps in the ceiling and floor. On the other hand, performances in private residences would have been adapted from the pre-existing space of the great hall or smaller, more modest rooms.⁸³ As such, if there were *frons scenae* presumably these would have been part of the decoration of the house, and any curtains or screens would have been either utilising pre-existing materials that were present in the hall, or would have been temporarily erected for the purposes of the performance. Astington notes that temporary scaffolds could still be erected for private performances: as such it was not that there were not theatrical visual elements to the space, but the key difference would be that they were temporary, and would have appeared as such in the context of the space.⁸⁴ As such, there would have been a number of visual and architectural differences between the kinds of playing spaces. Thus, although both public and private indoor playing spaces would have been seated and roofed, the similarities may not have extended much further than that: the size of the audience, seating arrangement, and the extensiveness of theatrical interior design would have been extremely different.

Secondly, the term 'hall' strengthens the faulty conceptualisation of both forms of drama as 'private' performances. There are some obvious similarities between private aristocratic performances and public indoor playhouses: many of their audience members would have been from the same socio-economic class, and they were both in indoor, fully seated venues, and there would have been overlap in the plays chosen for performance. But on the other hand, there are enormous differences. The majority of audience members at public indoor playhouses would not have had access to private performances, and would not have been from the aristocratic classes, but from the merchant, and trade classes, and even, according to the scornful references towards them in playwrights' Prologues, from the mechanical classes of 'sinfull sixe-penny Mechanicks' who sat in the cheapest seats in the highest tier of galleries: the 'oblique caves and wedges of your house'.⁸⁵

A side effect of eliding the public indoor playhouses with private aristocratic performances is that it runs the risk of situating the indoor playhouses within a tradition that has often been associated with decadence and Royalism. This has been particularly true for Caroline drama, which has been associated with amateur 'cavalier' playwrights, even though 'under Charles I,

⁸³ John Astington, *English Court Theatre, 1558-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.76.

⁸⁴ *English Court Theatre*, p.76.

⁸⁵ Ben Jonson, *The workes of Benjamin Jonson. The second volume* (London: John Beale, John Dawson 2, Bernard Alsop, Thomas Harper and Thomas Fawcet, 1640 [i.e. 1641]), sig. B1^v.

there is a clearly discernible line of dramatic production (albeit a minority one) which appeals to and encourages ‘anti-establishment’, generally Parliamentary Puritan sympathies’.⁸⁶ While Martin Butler has initiated a wave of critical rethinking of the connections between theatre and Royalist politics, associations of the public theatre with the private traditions still carries implications of sycophantic bias and low artistic merit. As the terminology of ‘hall’ playhouses groups the architecture of the public indoor theatres with court and aristocratic private performances, this risks associating the indoor public playhouses with decadence, and supports the idea of the indoor playhouses as having distinct repertoires from the outdoor playhouses, which linked more to plays performed privately.

As such, I argue that considering indoor playhouses as ‘halls’ elides their architectural differences and individuality, and risks positioning them in a tradition of aristocratic entertainment that, while there are some relevant connections, should not be homogenised or allowed to subsume the individual identities of the indoor public playhouses. Moreover, ‘amphitheatre’ is similarly problematic in terms of its inaccuracy and homogenisation of architectural variation, yet is commonly used to describe all outdoor playhouses. This term has been applied to all outdoor playhouses of the period, both when referring to them as a whole category and on an individual basis. The problem, however, is that many of the outdoor playhouses were not actually amphitheatres. The etymology of amphitheatre literally means a double theatre: as theatres in the ancient world were semi-circular, an amphitheatre implies ‘an oval or circular building, with seats rising behind and above each other, around a central open space or arena’.⁸⁷ Indeed, in the early modern period the term was not only used to refer to open air spaces: an indoor medical lecture hall which Inigo Jones built in Monkwell Street between 1635-1639 was referred to as an ‘Amphitheatrum’.⁸⁸

However, the Fortune playhouse was square, and while this is acknowledged when it is discussed in any depth, it is easy to perceive this as an interesting deviation from the norm without too much significance: an architectural experiment, perhaps, on the part of its designers, which was not popular and so did not take off in the theatrical tradition. As such, quadrilateral outdoor playhouses have been subsumed into the amphitheatre group. This problematically elides variations of playhouse design, but the architectural absorption of the Fortune into the amphitheatre group is not the full extent of the problem. The Boar’s Head was also square, and the Red Bull was a converted coaching inn, and as such the yard was a

⁸⁶ Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.16.

⁸⁷ *OED Online*, ‘amphitheatre, n.’, <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/6698?redirectedFrom=amphitheatre#eid>> [accessed 16 May 2106]

⁸⁸ Wickham, *Early English Stages*, II, p.140.

large rectangle.⁸⁹ Architecturally it probably had much more in common with the four City inn playhouses than it did with the Globe.

Moreover, the recent discoveries by the Museum of London Archaeology at the site of the Curtain playhouse have revealed that it was not, as was thought, an amphitheatre, but a rectangular building.⁹⁰ Although rectangular, it was *not* an inn, and a visit to the sites where the Red Bull and Curtain stood will reveal the manifest differences between them in both size, shape and design. With this in mind, the Fortune appears less like an outlier, and it becomes apparent that there was quite extensive variation between the architectural shapes and origins of the various outdoor playhouses. This is another instance where information about some playhouses has been extended to apply to all playhouses of that 'type', despite their manifest variations. Thus, considering the diversity of architecture in outdoor playing spaces, it is inappropriate to use 'amphitheatre' unless describing a specific space that is known to have been one: using it as an umbrella term unhelpfully homogenises the architectural differences of the various outdoor playing spaces.

In conclusion, this thesis argues that it is more appropriate to use the terms 'outdoor' and 'indoor' playhouses when making this broad division between two kinds of public playhouse. They are quite bland terms, and lose some aspects of descriptive detail that 'amphitheatre' and 'hall' convey, but this is more advantageous than not: it is better to lose nuance than it is to misleadingly group together venues under a description which does not apply to them all, but includes them based on a generalised idea of their social status and theatrical derivation. 'Outdoor' and 'indoor' highlight the primary feature along which the division between the kinds of playhouse, and they are free from the loaded histories of some of the other possible terms that have been problematically and inaccurately used in the past. Fresh, objective and descriptive terms should allow for more clarity and objectivity in critical thought, and allow new ways of thinking about these spaces.

Nevertheless, it is often useful to be more descriptive than this, and to specify as much about the known physical appearance where relevant. It is still necessary to use these terms and to make a distinction between the two kinds of houses, but it should also be kept in mind that used too generally and unthinkingly they can create an overemphasised and homogenising split which, although accurate to a degree, is not entirely clear cut. The buildings that were used to perform plays in London in the seventeenth century have a range of origins, shapes and characteristics, and even an indoor/outdoor split risks over-constructing a binary among what

⁸⁹ Herbert Berry, *The Boar's Head Playhouse* (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1986), p.107; Griffiths, *Jacobean Company*, p.96.

⁹⁰ MOLA team, 'Initial findings from excavation at Shakespeare's Curtain Theatre revealed', *MOLA blog* (17 May 2016) <<http://www.mola.org.uk/blog/initial-findings-excavation-shakespeare%E2%80%99s-curtain-theatre-revealed>> [accessed 3 June 2017]

was a far more varied range of spaces. There were amphitheatres, inn yards, halls, converted barns, palaces, chapels, Inns of Court, tennis courts, private houses and probably many more. Indeed, the diversity of playhouse architecture seems to have been realised in the early modern period: Edmund Howes describes the newly built Salisbury Court as

the seaunteenth Stage, or common Play-house, which hath beene new made with-in the space of threescore yeeres within London and the Suburbs, viz. Fiue Innes, or common Osteryes turned to Play-houses, one Cock-pit, S. Paules singing Schoole, one in the Black-fryers, and one in the White-fryers, which was built last of all . . . all the rest not named, were erected only for common Play-houses, besides the new built Beare garden, which was built as well for playes, and fencers prizes, as Bull bayting; besides one in former time at Newington Butts.⁹¹

The general shift towards commercial indoor playing could be seen as both a democratising and an elitist force: whereas before indoor theatre had largely been private and often aristocratic, by making it available on a commercial basis it brought the roofed theatrical environment, which had hitherto been largely unobtainable, to anyone who could pay 6 pence admission. This was certainly not everyone, but it seems to have included at least a few manual workers as well as a good percentage of audience members from the middling and merchant classes. On the other hand, the eventual shift towards smaller and more expensive indoor theatres signalled the decline of theatre as a populist entertainment by ensuring that only those of relatively comfortable economic status were likely to attend. Although this had no impact on audience sizes before the civil wars, after the Restoration the decreased number of theatrical venues and short period of use of the Red Bull – the last large, unroofed playhouse – meant that a far smaller amount of the population could attend the theatre than before.

⁹¹ *Annales, or, a General Chronicle of England. Begun by Iohn Stow: Continved and Augmented with matters Foraigne and Domestique, Ancient and Moderne, vnto the end of this present yeere, 1631* (Londini [London]: Richardi Meighen, 1631 [i.e. 1632]), sig. Iiiiv.

Chapter 2

Theatrical Traditions and Performance Venues during the Commonwealth and Restoration

This chapter will consider the developments in playhouse space from 1642 to the late 1660s, and will look at these in tandem with the theatrical and generic innovation of the period, as well as considering the impact of the unstable and rapidly evolving political background on the theatre industry. I argue that the perceived division between drama from before 1642 and after 1660 has been overstated: for example, *Restoration and Georgian England, 1669-1788* states that during this period there was ‘a complete revolution in theatrical activity’ which ‘cannot be too strongly emphasised’.⁹² On the contrary, I suggest that to treat the periods before the wars and after the Commonwealth as two entirely separate epochs is both to undervalue the continued traditions of playing in England through the 1643-1659 period, and to reductively create two wholly distinct English theatrical traditions for the Renaissance and the Restoration. There were a multitude of ways in which English theatrical traditions continued across this period, rather than eighteen years of stasis followed by the return of a completely distinct kind of theatre in 1660. This section will suggest that there was not a full cessation of theatrical activity during the civil wars and Commonwealth due to the illicit performances that took place, the increase in printing of theatrical texts, the writing of new closet and pamphlet dramas, and the endurance of theatrical traces and memories in both the extant playhouse buildings and the individuals who had attended theatres in the previous decades.

In arguing this I follow an established academic thread, but one which nevertheless does not frequently translate into significant adjustments to overarching historiographical narratives of theatre. Dale B.J. Randall observed in 1995 that it is remarkable to have to present the case that ‘1642 has for too long afforded students of English drama a comfortable point of closure’ given that in 1934 Louis B. Wright thought that ‘all the world knows since the publication of studies by Professors Graves, Rollins and Hotson’ that drama never ceased completely.⁹³

Indeed, the terms ‘Renaissance’ and ‘Restoration’ to divide the periods may be part of the problem, and an erroneous construction: Sophie Tomlinson highlights that the ‘era [is] more aptly characterised as “Baroque” than “Renaissance”’ and that ‘generously conceived, the baroque era designates a phase of artistic production stretching from about 1580 to at least 1700’.⁹⁴

⁹² David Thomas, ed., *Restoration and Georgian England, 1669-1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.2.

⁹³ *Winter fruit: English drama, 1642-1660* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995), p.1.

⁹⁴ ‘The Actress and Baroque Aesthetic Effects in Renaissance Drama’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 33.1 (2015), p.68.

This does not mean that the civil wars and Commonwealth did not have an enormous impact on theatrical traditions. The 1640s and 1650s were a unique moment for English drama, but rather than halting it, the effect of this period could be reframed as a rapid evolution: the wars and establishment of a Commonwealth put concentrated pressure on the theatre industry which limited its freedoms and thus forced it to make decisions about which of the existing repertoires and staging practices were retained, and as such caused it to radically evolve.

While there were not obvious developments in public playing spaces between the construction of Salisbury Court in 1629 and the period of rapid playhouse development in the early 1660s, there was a great deal of continuity: many theatre spaces stood for part or all of the period, many were still used illegally as playhouses, and some were in the early 1660s as well.

Moreover, it could be suggested that to a degree there *were* some additional spaces which became public playhouses: Rutland House was William Davenant's private London residence, at which he showed the *Siege of Rhodes part 1* in 1656, and Gibbons' Tennis Court's first recorded usage as a theatre came in 1653. In limiting the industry's ability to perform in the established professional theatres there was an increase in paid-entry performances in spaces which were not purpose-built or converted into playhouses, but private residences or other business enterprises such as these.⁹⁵ Under my broad definition of public playhouse as a venue for performance which charged an entry fee, these locations can be considered new public playhouse venues at this point. As it is also likely that most private residences performed to smaller audiences than those who would have attended even the indoor theatres beforehand, the new traditions of the public theatre may have started imitating certain aspects of the traditions of private theatre. This is corroborated by the sense of a blurring of boundaries between the public and private given of playing in the 1650s in *Historia Histrionica*:

Afterwards in *Oliver's* time, they used to Act privately, three or four Miles, or more, out of Town, now here, now there, sometimes in Noblemens Houses, in particular Holland-House at Kensington, where the Nobility and Gentry who met (but in no great numbers) used to make a Sum for them, each giving a broad Piece, or the like.⁹⁶

I would suggest that this assertion that they acted *privately* relates to the early modern sense meaning 'in a private, indoor space', and that in those instances where they were *not* in aristocratic households it would make sense for the performance to be open to an audience with a degree of heterogeneity, as in the indoor public theatres previously. This is supported when the text continues that '*Alexander Goffe*, the Woman Actor at *Blackfriers*, (who had made himself known to Persons of Quality) used to be Jackal and give notice of Time and Place.'⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.148.

⁹⁶ James Wright, *Historia Histrionica: An Historical Account of the English Stage, shewing The ancient Use, Improvement, and Perfection, of Dramatick Representations, in this Nation. In a Dialogue, of Plays and Players* (London: G. Croom for William Haws, 1699), p.9.

⁹⁷ Wright, *Historia Histrionica*, p.9.

The rest of the performances – those at Holland House and other aristocratic estates – do strain the definition of public playing: the payment system appears to be half way between an entry fee and patronage, and the clearly socially restricted entry suggests that the audience may have required an invitation or at least to have been informed, although this depends on how extensive the pool of people Goffe told about the performance was, as the gentry class consisted of a significant number of individuals. The shift of public theatre towards the traditions of private theatre is one that is often considered to have taken place during the Caroline and Restoration periods: perhaps it also continued during the civil wars and Commonwealth.

Nevertheless, there was undoubtedly a rapid period of change to the form of the English playhouse in the early 1660s in particular. The effects of the Commonwealth and Restoration had a significant impact on the English playhouse, and while there were continuities during this time there was also a great deal of change: the 1660s saw a rapid transition towards what could be considered a new type and generation of English playhouse in Killigrew and Davenant's official conversion of Gibbons' and Lisle's tennis courts into theatres.

1. The English Tradition of Interrupted and Illicit Playing

This section will build on the notion of continuity across the period by suggesting that cessations in dramatic activity – both unsuccessfully attempted and actually enforced – were not a shocking and unprecedented occurrence in 1642, and that on the contrary they had been part of the fabric of English dramatic activity since its inception. Truwit, an ‘Old Cavalier’ in a 1699 dialogue about the history of English theatre, reflects that before the civil wars actors have at times ‘been prohibited for a Season; as in times of Lent, general Mourning or publick Calamities or upon other occasions, when the Government saw fit’.⁹⁸ In defending playing against the accusation that it has traditionally been suppressed, the character nevertheless gives the impression of routine stoppages in playing, for a plethora of reasons and at the whim of the authorities.

Indeed, records suggest that it certainly was not uncommon for there to be periods of interruption to public performance in London in the early modern period. Plague closures in particular were frequent and often lengthy, sometimes lasting over a year, while annually performance was forbidden during certain times of year, such as Lent.⁹⁹ Leeds Barroll’s *Politics, Plague and Shakespeare’s Theatre: the Stuart Years* demonstrates that ‘extended playhouse closings, in 1603 but also for the next six years, became a real problem’, and other notable periods of plague closure include May 1636, when theatres were closed for nearly a year and a half, until October 1637.¹⁰⁰ But further to the more famous lengthy closures, Barroll suggests that the few critics of early modern drama who refer to plague ‘have examined the great epidemics, at the cost of looking away from the less sensational endemic upsurges in the times between’.¹⁰¹ Indeed, during 1603-1610 Barroll’s evidence and methodology suggests that playhouses would have been closed for more than half of the time: of the 340 months in this period that records of plague death numbers can be found, 175 weeks had 30 or more deaths from plague, and thus should have prompted the playhouses to be closed.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ *Historia Histrionica*, p.30.

⁹⁹ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, pp.85-91.

¹⁰⁰ *Politics, Plague*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), p.116; *Early English Playhouses*, p.664.

¹⁰¹ *Politics, Plague*, p.71.

¹⁰² See Barroll’s discussion of his methodology pp.98-100. While a warrant of 1604 specified that playhouses would be closed if 30 or more people died of plague in the city and liberties of London in a week, Barroll argues that the authorities closed the playhouses whenever they subjectively felt that plague deaths were dangerously high. However, as these subjective decisions were not regularly recorded and therefore are not quantifiable, Barroll conservatively considers the playhouses closed when plague deaths reached 30, despite finding recorded instances of them being closed when the number was lower. As such, Barroll considers even this amount of closure to be a conservative estimate, although he acknowledges that the data is not complete or entirely reliable. For the data used to make these calculations, see appendix 2, pp.223-226.

Sometimes plague closures overlapped with other causes, and the length of time theatre was stopped for in 'those periods when plague combined with Lenten stoppages or privy council special measures to extend the playhouse closings for prolonged periods have remained especially blurred.'¹⁰³ For example, while most of the long closure in 1603-04 was due to plague, part was out of respect and propriety during Queen Elizabeth's illness and after her death.¹⁰⁴

Thus, a temporary cessation of public performances for moral or practical reasons was not an alien or unprecedented occurrence, but a frequent and often protracted one. The ordinance on 2 September 1642 which put a stop to legal public performances certainly fits within the tradition and logic for theatrical cessations described by Barroll and in *Historia Histrionica*. In its entirety, the act reads:

Whereas the distressed Estate of Ireland, steeped in her own Blood, and the distracted Estate of England, threatened with a Cloud of Blood by a Civil War, call for all possible Means to appease and avert the Wrath of God, appearing in these Judgements; among which, Fasting and Prayer, having been often tried to be very effectual, having been lately and are still enjoined; and whereas Public Sports do not well agree with Public Calamities, nor Public Stage-plays with the Seasons of Humiliation, this being an Exercise of sad and pious Solemnity, and the other being Spectacles of Pleasure, too commonly expressing lascivious Mirth and Levity: It is therefore thought fit, and Ordained, by the Lords and Commons in this Parliament assembled, That, while these sad causes and set Times of Humiliation do continue, Public Stage Plays shall cease, and be forborn, instead of which are recommended to the People of this Land the profitable and seasonable considerations of Repentance, Reconciliation, and Peace with God, which probably may produce outward Peace and Prosperity, and bring again Times of Joy and Gladness to these Nations.¹⁰⁵

Certainly, the reasons given for the cessation are not those of inherent ideological rejection, and the impression given is of a temporary measure to try and appease God's anger:

Parliament calls for 'all possible Means to appease and avert the Wrath of God' which is thought to be manifesting through the outbreak of war. There is, therefore, an expectation of theatre recommencing again as soon as the troubles are over, and in 1642, few could have predicted the length of time that the hostilities would endure for.

There is a hint of moral disapproval contained in the description of 'Spectacles of Pleasure, too commonly expressing lascivious Mirth and Levity'. However, this seems contained within a long tradition of uneasiness about the effects and subversive content of public theatre, and

¹⁰³ Barroll, *Politics, Plague*, p.71.

¹⁰⁴ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.455.

¹⁰⁵ 'September 1642: Order for Stage-plays to cease', *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. by C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911) *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp26-27>> [accessed 3 January 2017].

was not a new concern or one limited to those with Parliamentary or puritan leanings.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, the idea that ‘Public Sports do not well agree with Public Calamities, nor Public Stage-plays with the Seasons of Humiliation, this being an Exercise of sad and pious Solemnity, and the other being Spectacles of Pleasure’ is one that would not have been especially controversial, or solely restricted to Parliamentarians.

Of course, in September 1642 nobody knew what the outcome of the wars would be, and even presuming a Parliamentary victory few would have anticipated Charles’ execution and the establishment of a Commonwealth which did not re-establish legal public theatre. Many would not have opposed controls or cessation of public theatre in these circumstances, including Royalists: John Evelyn is outraged in 1659 that public theatricals are permitted in such troubled times, considering it ‘prodigious that in a time of such public consternation such a vanity should be kept up, or permitted. I, being engaged with company, could not decently resist the going to see it, though my heart smote me for it’.¹⁰⁷ He would not have been the only Royalist to have considered entertainment more suitable for times of prosperity and celebration.

While it is possible that some Parliamentarians hostile to theatre took the opportunity to shut the playhouses in London – where they had a stronghold – for ideological reasons rather than those stated, nevertheless this would not be incompatible with the population having no particular sense that this would be a permanent or extended ban, just as the plague, Lenten and other stoppages declared by the authorities had not been before. *The actors remonstrance, or complaint* was published fifteen months after the ordinance of September 1642 and refers to the period as ‘this long vacation’, implying that the authors viewed this break in authorised performance as temporary and similar to those which had happened previously for other reasons.¹⁰⁸ Since it has continued for such an extended period, the actors who wrote the text seem to *fear* the difficulties in playing continuing indefinitely, describing it as ‘a long and (for ought wee know) an everlasting restraint’, but it is clear there is no certainty of ongoing closure, as evidenced by the pamphlet’s attempts sway opinion back towards the theatre industry.¹⁰⁹ The pamphlet’s tactics for achieving this goal are also revealing about the authors’ interpretation of why their profession is being restricted: it pleads that

¹⁰⁶ See esp. Martin Butler, *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), chapters 1 and 5, and Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp.18-47.

¹⁰⁷ John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. by William Bray (London: M. Walter Dunne, 1901), p.327.

¹⁰⁸ *The actors remonstrance, or complaint: for the silencing of their profession, and banishment from their severall play-houses* (London: Edw. Nickson, 1643), sig. A3^r.

¹⁰⁹ *The actors remonstrance*, sig. A2^r.

wee have purged our Stages from all obscene and scurrilous jests, such as might either be guilty of corrupting the manners, or defaming the persons of any men of note in the City or Kingdome.¹¹⁰

This suggests the authors suspect the cause of the cessation to be not general hostility to playing, but the Members of Parliaments' fear of being libelled or mocked on stage.

Though it is possible that those in Parliament who were hostile to theatre entirely were acting opportunistically, this is not enough to conclude that the closure of the theatres in 1642 was specifically and solely targeting plays as a source of impiety. There was certainly a general sense that solemnity and religious observance were required rather than leisure and entertainment to atone for the divine punishment the country was believed to be receiving as a consequence of ungodliness. The ordinance on 2 September was not one of a kind or an isolated occurrence: less than two weeks previously on 24 August, two days after war had officially broken out when Charles raised his standard at Nottingham, Parliament issued an ordinance designed to more strictly enforce a monthly day of fasting and religious observance, which ordered that *'The people to be exhorted in all Churches, etc., to keep the Public Fast.; And not to use any Sport or Trade on the day thereof; Offenders names to be returned to the Knights of the County'*.¹¹¹ As previously, the reason is cited as demonstrating repentance to God. Most interestingly, however, the ordinance highlights that it is re-enforcing an existing Proclamation by Charles which has been poorly complied with. It clearly positions itself as deriving from Charles' authority and working to achieve the same goals as him:

*the Kings most excellent Majesty [...] considering the lamentable and distressed condition of His good subjects in the Kingdome of Ireland [...] was graciously pleased to Command the keeping of a monethly Fast' [and] 'did afterwards [on] the 8 of January 1641, appoint that the same should be generally, publikely, and solemnely holden and kept, as well by abstinence from food, as by publike Prayers, Preaching, and Hearing of the Word of God' in every church and chapel in England and Wales until the end of the troubles in Ireland.*¹¹²

Thus, this ordinance frames itself as enforcing the will of the King, and acting contrary to the

great neglect of the due observation and keeping of the said Fast upon the daies appointed, and of the prophanations of the same by many irreligious, ill-affected, loose, and scandalous persons, as well of the Clergy as others, who are so farre from afflicting their soules: and loosing the bands of wickednesse, as that they provoke the Wrath of Almighty God, and make so pious a meanes to procure his blessings, the occasion of greater Judgements¹¹³

Thus, while the religious inclinations of many of those in the Long Parliament may have inclined legislation towards self-denial and piety, it was not solely a method which was

¹¹⁰ *The actors remonstrance*, sig. A2r.

¹¹¹ 'August 1642: An Ordinance for the better observation of the monethly Fast', *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed by C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911) *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp22-24>> [accessed 3 January 2017].

¹¹² 'August 1642: An Ordinance'. Emphasis in original.

¹¹³ 'August 1642: An Ordinance'.

considered appropriate by radical Protestants, but was a broadly accepted way of showing piety and humility towards God, and obtaining his forgiveness and mercy. Attempts at regulating moral and religious behaviour were not new or unique, and there was established precedent for enforcing religious observance and moral behaviour. As just one example, in February 1624, the House of Commons debated ‘An act for punishment of divers abuses on the Lord’s Day, called Sunday’ and ‘An act to prevent and reform profane swearing and cursing’.¹¹⁴

Interestingly, there are two subsequent ordinances by Parliament in February 1643 and after the first civil war had been concluded in December 1646.¹¹⁵ These attempted to reinforce the monthly fast referred to above - which was clearly poorly observed - before it was admitted to have been unsuccessful and cancelled in April 1649, shortly after Charles’ execution, and replaced by two days of religious observance in the hope that this would appease God and allow victory in the wars in Ireland.¹¹⁶ That the monthly fast day is a regular concern of Parliament’s legislation through the 1640s, but playhouses are not mentioned again until 1647 could be thought to indicate that unlike the observance of the monthly fast the closure of the playhouses had been successfully enforced. This is possible, but I would suggest that it is equally possible that although theatre had not been successfully stopped this was not a primary concern of the government at this time, and they preferred to allow it to continue rather than write new legislation and penalties for it.

Moreover, the date 1642 is not one that has always been synonymous with the cessation of drama: *Historia Histrionia* (1699) cites 1647 as the date that Parliamentarians suppressed the stage: there was

nothing to suppress them totally, till the two Ordinances of the Long Parliament, one of the 22 of October 1647, the other of the 11 of Feb. 1647. By which all Stage-Plays and Interludes are absolutely forbid; the Stages, Seats, Galleries etc. to be pulled down; all Players tho’ calling themselves the King or Queens

¹¹⁴ ‘24th February 1624’, *Proceedings in Parliament 1624: The House of Commons*, ed. by Philip Baker (British History Online, 2015) <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/proceedings-1624-parl/feb-24>> [accessed 4 January 2017].

¹¹⁵ ‘February 1643: An Ordinance exhorting all his Majestie’s good subjects in the Kingdome of England, and Dominion of Wales, to the duty of Repentance’, *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. by C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1911) *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp80-82>> [accessed 3 January 2017]; ‘December 1646: An Ordinance for the better Observation of the Monethly Fast’, *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. by C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait, (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1911) *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp905-907>> [accessed 7 January 2017].

¹¹⁶ ‘April 1649: An Act For setting apart A Day of Solemn Fasting and Humilation, And Repealing the former Monethly Fast’, *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. by C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1911) *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp79-81>> [accessed 8 January 2017].

servants and as such Acting within the Realm, all of them on conviction to be punished and fin'd according to Law.¹¹⁷

The theatre industry certainly changed and significantly reduced between 1642-1646, perhaps mainly due to many theatre professionals leaving London to fight in the war, and reduced audiences due to the social and economic instability and loss of life that the conflict caused. I have not found any records of performances being noted or suppressed during this time, and *Historia Histrionica* implies that this was the case when it states that the vast majority of actors went into the service of the King during the war, and afterwards around the winter of 1648 '[t]hey made up one Company out of all the Scatter'd Members of Several'.¹¹⁸ However, the pamphlet's purpose is important in assessing the accuracy here: as a pro-theatrical response to Jeremy Collier's 1698 *Short View of the Profanity and Immorality of the English Stage*, theatre's defence and its authority is derived in part from the service and loyalty of those in the profession to the Royalist cause. As such, bias or exaggeration in this account is not unlikely, and coupled with the fifty year gap of time, this should not be taken as conclusive evidence. Moreover, there is evidence that the playhouses *were* being used for quasi-theatrical entertainments: *Mercurius Veridicus* reports that a fencing match or prize fight took place at the second Fortune in April 1645 between

A waterman and a shoemaker [who] met at the Fortune playhouse to play at several weapons, at which (though they had but private summons) many were present. And in the midst of their pastime, divers of the trained bands beset the house and, some constables being present, had choice of fit men to serve the King and Parliament.¹¹⁹

The fact that the audience had private summons suggests that fights staged as entertainment were an illicit activity, just as playgoing would have been – and as such it is not clear why there would have been a significant difference or additional risk in staging play performances there as well. Thus, while the lack of evidence of illegal playing during this time could be because it was not taking place, it is also possible that this was because it was not being suppressed: performances may not have been an important concern of the authorities, who were likely to have had more important things to concern themselves with, but by the time the first civil war had concluded in 1646 the authorities would have had more time to focus on domestic matters. It appears likely that Parliament's decision to legislate against theatre in 1647 implies that it had been taking place to some degree, otherwise it is unclear why this would have been necessary.

Unlike the ordinance on 2 September 1642, those of 22 October 1647 and 11 February 1648 are worded to clearly demonstrate a suppression and a punishable felony rather than a

¹¹⁷ pp.31-32.

¹¹⁸ *Historia Histrionica*, p.8.

¹¹⁹ *Mercurius Veridicus. Or, the True Intelligencer*, 19-26 April 1645 (London: Bernard Allsop, 1645), cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.645.

temporary cessation due to circumstance. The October ordinance is brief, but cites its purpose as being ‘the better suppression of Stage-Playes, Interludes, and common Players’, and gives various authorities authorization to search houses where plays may be taking place, with those caught acting ‘to be punished as Rogues, according to Law.’¹²⁰ While it might be thought that the ‘suppression’ mentioned here is referring to the 1642 ordinance, this is not the case. The February 1648 ordinance elucidates this vague reference to law, making clear that it is utilising existing, unenforced and dormant laws rather than creating new ones, seemingly as a way of justifying what was, in fact, a new suppression. It states that actors are

Rogues, and punishable, within the Statutes of the thirty ninth year of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, and the seventh year of the Reign of King James, and liable unto the pains and penalties therein contained, and proceeded against according to the said Statutes, whether they be wanderers or no, and notwithstanding any License whatsoever from the King or any person or persons to that purpose.¹²¹

As well as justifying itself with royal, historical and legal authority, this frames theatre as an activity that has always been illegal in England, but has simply existed due to poor criminal enforcement. This accounts for the earlier October ordinance’s sleight-of-hand in calling for ‘the better suppression’ of theatre: it had not been legally suppressed, but in reframing theatre as an activity that had always been illegal it could be pretended that the action was simply a matter of enforcement.

In addition to classifying actors as ‘rogues’ and threatening severe ‘pains and penalties’, the second ordinance states that playhouses are to be either ruined or pulled down completely. This demonstrative outlawing suggests that 1647 is a more accurate date for what might be considered a Parliamentary suppression of drama. This remains the case even if public playing did in effect cease between September 1642 and some point in 1646 or 1647, because what caused this was not an extraordinary Parliamentary suppression, but a cessation of theatre which was due to practical constraints, made sense to a broad consensus of society, and was recognisably based in previous traditions of cessation in English theatre.

If late 1647 can be taken as the date of the official suppression of theatre, it does not necessarily follow that this was the date that English theatre was interrupted and followed by a thirteen rather than eighteen year dramatic interregnum. Indeed, the weight of evidence seems to suggest that playing actually increased, and Berry corroborates that most playhouses were

¹²⁰ ‘October 1647: An Ordinance for the Lord Major and City of London, and the Justices of Peace to suppress Stage-playes and Interludes’, *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. by C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911) *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/p1027>> [accessed 20 January 2017]

¹²¹ ‘February 1648: An Ordinance for the utter suppression and abolishing of all Stage-Plays and Interludes, within the Penalties to be inflicted on the Actors and Spectators therein expressed’, *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. by C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911) *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp1070-1072>> [accessed 20 January 2017].

used for performance after 1642, but ‘especially in 1647, 1648 and early 1649’.¹²² As is often the case, the threats made in the legislation were not necessarily carried out: I have not found any records of whipping or extended periods of imprisonment, and in the raid of 1649 the Salisbury Court actors had their costumes confiscated, but these were returned to them after a few days without any damage, while the audience’s only punishment was to not have the admission fee they had paid returned to them.¹²³ The ordinance of February 1648 itself admits that playing was regularly taking place, saying that theatre ‘hath been prohibited by Ordinance of this present Parliament, and yet is presumed to be practised by divers in contempt thereof’.¹²⁴ While it is harder to say for certain the extent of public playing from September 1642-1646, from around 1647 onwards there certainly was not either a full cessation or suppression of theatrical performance.¹²⁵ Firstly, the ordinance’s demand that

the Lord Mayor, Justices of the Peace, and Sheriffs of the City of London and Westminster, and of the Counties of Middlesex and Surrey, [are] authorized and required, to pull down and demolish [...] all Stage-Galleries, Seats, and Boxes, erected or used, [for] Stage-Playes, Interludes, and Playes

was not adhered to, and the performance spaces remained intact, and indeed in use. Few if any of the playing venues in London seem to have been vandalised as an immediate consequence of the February 1648 ordinance. Later, in a raid in 1649 the Cockpit, second Fortune, Red Bull and Salisbury Court were ‘ruinated’ internally, although whatever the soldiery did to the interiors does not seem to have been too severe: certainly not enough to significantly reduce the playhouses’ value as buildings, or to deter repair and further use for performance in the future. Additionally, there are no reports of the second Blackfriars being destroyed, and when William Burbage sold the space in 1651 the wording of the contract suggests that it was still fitted up for use as a playhouse.¹²⁶

Moreover, playing continued in the Cockpit, Fortune, Red Bull and Salisbury Court on at least a semi-regular basis until at least 1649. It was reported in the *Kingdom’s Weekly Intelligencer* in September 1648 that ‘Stage plays were daily acted either at the [Red] Bull or Fortune or the private house at Salisbury Court’.¹²⁷ The Cockpit is omitted in this account, but it also housed performances. The owner of the building complained that the rent had not been paid by Elizabeth Kirke and her husband Sir Lewis Kirke who rented it at the time despite the fact

¹²² Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.669.

¹²³ *Kingdom’s Weekly Intelligencer*, 2-9 January 1648/9, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, pp.669-670.

¹²⁴ ‘February 1648: An Ordinance for the utter suppression and abolishing of all Stage-Plays’, 1070-1072.

¹²⁵ Hotson’s *Commonwealth and Restoration Drama* remains the most extensive exploration of this subject. There is evidence of playing continuing at Salisbury Court, the Cockpit, the Red Bull and the Fortune theatre.

¹²⁶ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.529; p.503.

¹²⁷ *Kingdom’s Weekly Intelligencer*, 18-25 January 1648, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.646.

they sometimes make ‘a very extraordinary profit for in several nights’ since September 1647 they ‘have gained by acting of plays there about £30 or £40 a night.’¹²⁸

Although perhaps exaggerated by the complainant, these large sums begin to reveal that illicit performances were well attended and lucrative. Performances in these years do not seem to have happened in small numbers – either in regularity or audience size – or absolute secrecy either. The *Kingdom’s Weekly Intelligencer* also reported that on a Sunday in January 1648 there were ‘ten coaches to hear Dr Ussher at Lincoln’s Inn [to hear a sermon], but there were about six-score coaches on the last Thursday in Golden Lane to hear the players at the Fortune.’¹²⁹ Another publication, *Mercurius Elencticus*, remarked in the same month that ‘Where a dozen coaches tumble after Obadiah Sedgewick [a preacher], three-score are observed to wheel to the Cockpit.’¹³⁰

The publication of the extent of theatregoing in these newspapers demonstrates it was in the public knowledge that playing was going on – as is also demonstrated by the raid on Salisbury Court in October 1647, which was reported in three different publications. In reporting the foiled attempt at a production of *A King and No King*, *Perfect Occurrences* reports that bills had been stuck up advertising the performance.¹³¹ Perhaps the fact that this was notable implies that it was unusual and it was more usual for an individual to act as a ‘crier’ and publicise performances through a method that involved less permanent material evidence. But it also demonstrates that enforcement and attitudes towards playing must have, notwithstanding, been thought liberal enough, and the likelihood of severe punishment small enough, that advertising bills were a considered a method worth attempting.

The report of a co-ordinated raid on four playhouses perhaps also reveals one of the reasons why enforcement and punishment of the law was lax. It states that at Salisbury Court they found ‘a great number of people, some young lords and other eminent persons’.¹³² At a time still of enormous political instability and uncertainty, there may not have been the resources or ability to discipline large numbers of people, especially those who were rich. The reports above of coaches travelling to the playhouses suggests a high social class and level of affluence, and

¹²⁸ NA, C2/Chas. I/H108/34 and *Mercurius Elencticus*, 19-26 January 1648, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.637. Also note that Elizabeth Kirke was formerly Elizabeth Beeston, the second wife of Christopher Beeston and William Beeston’s stepmother. See Andrew Gurr, ‘Beeston [Hutchinson], William (1610/11?–1682)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/67810> and Andrew Gurr, ‘Beeston [Hutchinson], Christopher (1579/80–1638)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/66593>. *English Professional Theatre*, p.636, mistakenly describes her as William Beeston’s mother but she – Jane Sands – was dead.

¹²⁹ *Kingdom’s Weekly Intelligencer*, 18-25 January 1648, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.646.

¹³⁰ NA, C2/Chas. I/H108/34 and *Mercurius Elencticus*, 19-26 January 1648, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.637.

¹³¹ *Perfect Occurrences*, 1-8 October 1647, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.669.

¹³² *Perfect Occurrences*, 1-8 October 1647, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.669.

as such punishing theatregoers according to the severe terms of the ordinance – especially large numbers or those with significant social power – could have had disastrous consequences for the authorities’ shaky grip on power had it prompted dissent.

Moreover, I would suggest that as well as omitting the Cockpit in its summary of the metropolis’s theatrical activity, *The Kingdom’s Weekly Intelligencer* made another error. Rather than playing at one or the other of the houses, it seems more likely that performances were frequently happening at multiple venues simultaneously. This is primarily evidenced by a raid in 1649 which does seem to have impacted on theatre, and how and where it was performed. A report states that all four houses were raided by the soldiery simultaneously – three of which were in the middle of performing plays, and one of which housed a rope dancer – and only then did the stages seem to become unfit for purpose and fall out of use.¹³³ As I will argue later in my chapter on Salisbury Court, it seems highly unlikely that the four would have co-ordinated their performances if they were only very occasional, as surely that would decrease their share of audience members, and as such it seems very likely that at this point at least four playhouses were still operating on a regular basis.

The interiors of these four theatres seem to have been made unfit for performance by soldiers during this raid, which simultaneously demonstrated that the ordinance would now begin to be enforced rather than allowing obvious breaching of the laws to continue. As such, the pre-war playhouses seem to have been largely if temporarily abandoned as venues for illicit performances. But still this still did not indicate the end of playing in London: even after Charles’ execution and the vandalism of many of the pre-war playhouses, theatrical performances did not stop: records crop up again in 1652, and 1653, when an ‘ill Beast’ betrays a group of actors putting on a performance at a new public theatrical venue: Gibbons’ Tennis Court. Davenant performed his *Siege of Rhodes part one* in Rutland House in 1656, which, although a private residence, was selling tickets to the public. Hotson notes that these performances must have been regarded as ‘semi-private’, and that ‘although he distributed bills to those whom he expected to attend, doubtless he did not scatter them about too openly’.¹³⁴ Davenant also managed in some ways to make himself useful and desirable to the Commonwealth government, who recognised the value of entertainments for government officials and to impress foreign visitors. In a memorandum to Secretary Thurloe in January

¹³³ *Kingdom’s Weekly Intelligencer*, 2-9 January 1648/9, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.669. Even then, they were not beyond repair as three of the four were used again for public performances in the late 1650s and early 1660s. In all likelihood there was a degree of interior vandalism, but they were not ‘pulled down’ or destroyed.

¹³⁴ Hotson, p.154.

1657 Davenant argues for the usefulness of entertainments for health, and for keeping the wealthy in London, who in turn would give employment to the mechanics and tradespeople.¹³⁵

Although it certainly should not be taken as entirely accurate, being written in 1699 and with a pronounced bias towards theatre and Royalists, as well as containing some inaccuracies, *Historia Histrionia* presents a picture of playing during this period that seems highly feasible.¹³⁶

When the Wars were over, and the Royalists totally Subdued; most of 'em who were left alive gather'd to *London*, and for a Subsistence endeavour'd to revive their Old Trade, privately.¹³⁷ They made up one Company out of all the Scatter'd Members of Several; and in the Winter before the King's Murder, 1648, They ventured to Act some Plays with as much caution and privacy as cou'd be, at the *Cockpit*. They continu'd undisturbed for three or four Days; but at last as they were presenting the Tragedy of the Bloody Brother, (in which Lowin Acted Aubrey, Tayler Rollo, Pollard the Cook, Burt Latorch, and I think Hart Otto) a Party of Foot Souldiers beset the House, surprized 'em about the midle of the Play [...] Afterwards in *Oliver's* time, they used to Act privately, three or four Miles, or more, out of Town, now here, now there, sometimes in Noblemens Houses, in particular Holland-House at Kensington, where the Nobility and Gentry who met (but in no great numbers) used to make a Sum for them, each giving a broad Piece, or the like. And *Alexander Goffe*, the Woman Actor at *Blackfriars*, (who had made himself known to Person of Quality) used to be Jackal and give notice of Time and Place.¹³⁸ At Christmas, and Bartlemew-fair, they used to Bribe the Officer who Commanded the Guard at White-hall, and were thereupon connived at to Act for a few Days, at the Red Bull; but were sometimes notwithstanding Disturb'd by the Soldiers.¹³⁹

This suggests a picture of a reduced but still continually active history of performance in London through the period. It introduces the idea that officials might be bribed to turn a blind eye, and that performances at the Red Bull at least did not cease entirely throughout the Commonwealth. There were also certainly instances which are not included in this description of the theatrical landscape: Davenant's performances at Rutland House do not seem to be included, since Davenant was not nobility, and his house was in London rather than a few miles out of town. Further, no mention is made of the performances which took place at Gibbons' Tennis Court. Indeed, given the bias of the text against Cromwell and the Commonwealth government it is likely that the stringency of the enforcement against theatre described here is probably exaggerated: certainly, if there were three plays occurring

¹³⁵ Hotson, p.155.

¹³⁶ Inaccuracies in the text include the statement that the Fortune was round when it was in fact square, and the accuracy of its assertion that the Blackfriars, Cockpit and Salisbury Court were 'all alike in forme and bigness' has been repeatedly challenged.

¹³⁷ I would contend that in this context 'private' theatre means 'in privacy; with secrecy'. Certainly the theatrical events being described adhere to the definition of public playing which I use throughout this thesis, which is that it is open to the public for an entry fee, and this is often at odds with the definitions of public and private given by early modern individuals.

¹³⁸ Whether this description counts as public playing or not is ambiguous: on the one hand if it is only open to nobility and they have a system of financial donation or patronage rather than an entry fee, this suggests private playing. However, the suggestion that Goffe was a 'Jackal' or crier and publicised the time and place of performance suggests that it was a public performance open to those who could pay to attend.

¹³⁹ pp.8-9.

simultaneously in different venues during the 1649 raids it does not follow that there was only one theatre company in the winter of 1648-1649. This under-estimation of theatrical activity is again evidenced by the fact that the text mentions only the Cockpit, although performances are known to have been taking place in the Fortune, Red Bull and Salisbury Court as well.

While the records of playing which I have cited from this period are rather sporadic, this does not necessarily indicate an extremely limited theatre industry. Partly it is in keeping with the incomplete nature of documentation and records in the period. But I would argue that the limited records of raids show that theatrical performances were not heavily policed or regulated, and that authorities may have turned a blind eye to performances, rather than indicating a lack of attempts. As is often the case with early modern history we know what occurred only by the records which we have, which more often than not show when something went wrong or was exceptional, rather than reflecting everyday lived experience. I would argue, based on the four simultaneous theatrical performances which were raided in 1649, coupled with the relative leniency that the actors received in contrast to the severity of the punishments described in the recent February 1648 ordinance suppressing players, that illicit performances were more common and punished as a less serious misdemeanour than we have hitherto thought, or the law at the time indicated. Rather than the few records indicating that there were few attempts at theatrical performances, and all those attempted were put down, I suggest that this simply shows that the authorities were either unable to police theatre to the extent that it was properly quashed, or relatively happy to turn a blind eye to the existence of some theatre, providing it posed no other threat and was within certain parameters of secrecy and morality.

Thus, while theatre was an illicit activity for some years during the mid-part of the seventeenth century, it was not as simple as a complete eighteen-year fissure in theatrical performance. Although in 1642 theatre was ordered to temporarily cease by the government, this was not an unprecedented or morally prescriptive closure, but within an established tradition of stopping the production of theatre for a short or middling period. The extent to which theatre continued and violated that ban is not entirely clear. Playing was finally explicitly banned in 1647, when the first civil war had ended and Parliamentary forces taken control of London, but it undoubtedly continued, and although it was occasionally interrupted or punished there was no concerted or draconian suppression: indeed, it may have often taken place with the unspoken consent of the authorities in the form of bribery or failure to act on knowledge of performance.

Nevertheless, the status and amount of theatrical activity certainly would have changed, and undergone a series of developments both in repertory and in the venues of performance. But in some regards not all of this was without precedent in the previously established conventions

of English dramatic activity: not only was there a tradition of periods of cessation for the playhouses which was invoked during the first civil war in particular, but there was also an established tradition of *breaching* these theatrical bans. Barroll collects 16 pieces of primary evidence suggesting Lenten stoppage did take place in the early seventeenth century (although several of these do also refer to a breach of the closure), and a list of four pieces of primary evidence which he terms 'Mixed indications'. These suggest breaches of the Lenten closures, such as payments recorded in Henslowe's diary which do not end and begin again at the same time as Lent. Thus, Barroll's evidence seems to suggest that in general playing stopped during Lent as legislated, but that there were numerous instances where this was not obeyed. I suggest that a similar response of partial disobedience was provoked by the decision to prevent theatrical performance on a longer-term basis.

2. The Continuation of English Theatrical Traditions 1642-1660

As I have argued in the previous section, English theatrical traditions survived during the civil wars and Commonwealth periods via the continuation of playgoing and public dramatic performance, which never fully ceased. However, there were also a number of other ways through which English theatrical legacy continued and even evolved in often less tangible but equally significant ways. I suggest these were: the continued architectural existence of pre-war playhouses in London through the period, the publication of existing and newly written dramatic texts, the interaction of those in exile with French and continental dramatic traditions, and somewhat less tangibly, in the memories and phenomenological experiences of a significant percentage of Londoners.

Londoners' phenomenological experiences and memories

Despite the fact that continued theatrical performance during this period meant that after 1660 'by no means all of the older members of the audience had to search their memories beyond the year 1642 for records of performances they had seen in the past', it is still important to bear in mind that many of them *could*.¹⁴⁰ The cessation of drama in the middle of the century was not nearly long enough for pre-war English theatre to be out of living memory for a significant percentage of the population. As such, even for those Londoners who could not or did not go to see the illicit performances which continued during this time, many of them would still have recollected a time when they did go to watch plays, and would still have been able to do so in the 1660s. Nor should we assume that such recollections would only be dim or lacking in detail – Pepys makes clear references after the Restoration to the playhouses, plays and conventions he remembers from before the wars despite being nine years old when they began, while *Historia Histrionica* although published as late as 1699, demonstrates a considerable and detailed knowledge of English dramatic practice, actors and companies.

The evolution of English dramatic tradition in France and on the continent

While theatrical memories from the past belonging to Londoners residing in England and no longer watching theatre do not signify an *evolution* for English dramatic tradition, the same cannot necessarily be said for the Londoners residing in Europe for part of this period. Obviously, theatre outside of the British Isles was unaffected by the civil wars, and as such it

¹⁴⁰ Allardyce Nicholl. *A History of English Drama 1660-1900, Volume I Restoration Drama 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p.285.

was taking place as usual in Paris where the future Charles II, his court and many other English citizens – especially royalists – spent much of their time in exile.

As a result of this, narratives of the period frequently conceptualise Charles's return in 1660 not only as a return of drama, but as the import of a revolutionised and unrecognisable form of drama, largely derived from French tradition – especially in terms of the appearance of women playing female stage roles. While in many ways this is accurate it is also rather reductive, as it overlooks both that the English theatrical tradition never fully died out and that the causation of these developments is more blurry. Rather, during this time the English dramatic tradition underwent a period of rapid development, augmented and influenced by continental theatrical traditions which were absorbed into an English conception of drama rather than replacing it. It is undeniable that French theatrical practice was a large influence on English drama from 1660 onwards, but perhaps the composite nature of the English language is an apt comparison: although around 60% of English words derive from French after being absorbed into the language following the Norman invasion of 1066, at root and in its structure English remains a Germanic language.

Indeed, the impact of French theatre may not have even been as significant as this metaphor suggests – certainly, English plays written before 1642 dominated the repertory in the 1660s, and have continued to hold a substantial place in English performance history ever since. W. Moelwyn Merchant notes that during the Restoration 'the dramatists were themselves self-conscious in their repudiation of the new-fangled imports' and that '[t]hroughout the Restoration there was a conscious attempt to assert the unbroken tradition in acting and scenic painting, which linked their age with Shakespeare's'.¹⁴¹ Merchant, however, appears sceptical of the accuracy of the Restoration dramatists' perception, noting that '[i]t is still customary to attribute much of the scenic elaboration of the Restoration to French influences acquired during the exile of the English court in the Commonwealth period' and emphasising that before the court returned from experiencing continental practices English theatres had been completely closed - an idea which I have already provided evidence against.¹⁴²

While French and English theatre had a large intersection at this point because of the residence of much of the aristocracy in France for an extended period, this influence was not new: French theatre had already had an influence on the English, particularly in terms of private and courtly playing. Merchant points out that 'in Shakespeare's own day masque and entertainment were closely related to Mannerist and early Baroque trends on the Continent; that Inigo Jones echoed the work of Parigi in Florence and that the Restoration 'Art of

¹⁴¹ W. Moelwyn Merchant, 'Shakespeare "Made fit"', in *Restoration Theatre*, ed. by John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies 6 (London: Edward Arnold, 1965), p.201.

¹⁴² 'Shakespeare "Made fit"', p.201.

Perspective' was already present in the cloths and shutters with which Inigo Jones gained depth in his scenes.¹⁴³ Moreover, Tomlinson argues that Henrietta Maria's first performance – which crucially was a speaking role – in a French pastoral at the English court in 1626 was an 'arresting, at once cultural intervention – an assertion of a different heritage – and theatrical innovation'.¹⁴⁴ The examples given above are, of course, from the private rather than public tradition. But the touring continental troupes which included women were not, such as the actresses in a French troupe which was licensed by Herbert to perform at Blackfriars in 1629. Thomas Brande reports his pleasure at the troupe being 'hissed, hooted and pippin-pelted from the stage', although it is unclear where this was solely due to the presence of women, or also hostility based on class and national prejudice: he also calls them 'vagrant French players' who performed a 'lacious [sic] and unchaste comedye, in the French tonge'.¹⁴⁵

Moreover, the public and private English traditions before the wars had plenty of overlap and influence on each other, and while the performances of Henrietta Maria and her women were not available to public view, they were still widely known about. This was particularly the case after the famous arraignment of William Prynne in 1633 after his description 'women actors, notorious whores' was taken to be referring to the queen's performance in Walter Montague's *The Shepherd's Paradise*.¹⁴⁶ Thus, this degree of fame and publication suggests that the cross-pollination of the public and private English traditions before the wars demonstrates that, to a degree, the influence of French theatre was not a new phenomenon in English public playing; even though it may have accelerated significantly during the 1650s and 1660s the absorption of French stylistic features was part of an existing English tradition.

However, the peculiarly *French* influence on the English tradition from 1660 can be overstated: it overlooks the complex web of theatrical cross-pollination which existed throughout theatre in Europe. The traditions of French theatre were themselves enormously indebted to and influenced by Italian and Spanish drama, and so at this point it can become difficult to disentangle the exact point of origin.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, while much of the French influence on English drama can be considered Italian through a French conduit, this sometimes also circumvented France altogether. Travelling in Italy, John Evelyn sees 'a theatre for pastimes' at

¹⁴³ 'Shakespeare "Made fit"', p.201.

¹⁴⁴ Sophie Tomlinson, 'She That Plays the King: Henrietta Maria and the Threat of the Actress in Caroline Culture', in *The Politics of Tragicomedy: Shakespeare and After*, ed. by Gordon McMullan and Jonathan Hope (London: Routledge, 1992), p.189.

¹⁴⁵ Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, I, p.25.

¹⁴⁶ The extent of the public's awareness of Prynne – both sympathetic and hostile – after his punishment following the publication of *Histrio-Mastix*, and the self-publicising theatricality with which both Prynne and his opponents conducted their self-representations and political propaganda, is well documented in David Cressy, *Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England – Tales of Discord and Dissension* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), esp. pp.215-220 and pp. 224-229.

¹⁴⁷ William D. Howarth and others, eds., *French Theatre in the Neo-Classical Era, 1550-1781*, Theatre in Europe: a documentary history (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.1.

the end of ‘a very long gallery’ at a country house near Frascati in May 1645, sees ‘rare scenes’ at the Opera in Milan and describes the stage machinery and perspective scenery of the Opera in Venice as ‘one of the most magnificent and expensive diversions the wit of man can invent’.¹⁴⁸ As such, by 1659 he is well acquainted enough with Italian theatrical traditions to describe an opera in London as ‘after the Italian way, in recitative music and scenes, [but] much inferior to the Italian composure and magnificence’.¹⁴⁹ I would suggest that the experiences of those like Evelyn who had no connection to or even taste for the theatre still in some regards had an impact on the collective English experience and understanding of the possibilities of the theatrical, but in ascertaining the influences that are most likely to have directly translated into English dramatic practice it is most useful to consider the experiences of those who were responsible for driving it after the Restoration.

Davenant’s only time on the continent was spent in St Germain-en-Laye near Paris, and then at the Louvre with Lord Jermyn before his plan to sail for the American colonies in 1650 was intercepted and resulted in his being brought back to England as a prisoner of the Commonwealth government.¹⁵⁰ In contrast, Killigrew’s exile demonstrates an extraordinary amount of travel and contact with a vast number of cities. He travelled to meet the exiled Prince Charles by April 1647, who sent him to raise financial support in Italy, before joining James, the Duke of York at The Hague in May 1648. He transferred back to Prince Charles’s circle in Paris after Charles I’s execution, and was sent as an envoy to Turin, Genoa, Leghorn, Pisa, Florence and Venice, the last of which he stayed in for over two years. He was then at The Hague before moving to Paris in May 1653, and possibly spent time in Madrid in around 1654, as the title page of *Thomaso, or, The Wanderer*, claims it was written there. After June 1654 Killigrew returned to The Hague where he married Charlotte van Hesse-Piershil in January 1655; the couple moved to Maastricht within a year, but were back in The Hague by early 1658. He accompanied Charles on a tour around the Dutch republic in September 1658, and then seems to have spent the last few months of exile back in Maastricht.¹⁵¹

It is striking how small a role Paris plays in Killigrew’s continental experiences: Italy and the Netherlands had far more opportunity to make an impact. Moreover, George Jolly – a member of Prince Charles’ Men at the Fortune before the civil wars, who, like Davenant and Killigrew, became a theatre manager with a royal license in the early 1660s – was also in exile for much of this period, and during his theatrical tours mainly resided in Germany, and a few other Protestant, Germanic countries. He may or may not have performed for the English

¹⁴⁸ *Diary*, p.178; p.225; p.202.

¹⁴⁹ *Diary*, p.327.

¹⁵⁰ Mary Edmond, ‘Davenant, Sir William (1606–1668)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/7197>

¹⁵¹ J. P. Vander Motten, ‘Killigrew, Thomas (1612–1683)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/15538>

royalist community in exile in The Hague and Paris from 1644-1646, but certainly from April 1647 was running a touring company which seems to have performed in German and perhaps some other languages. Astington states that:

[i]n 1647 the company appears to have been in Brussels, then at Bruges, and in spring 1648 at Cologne, where they played for three months, moving to Frankfurt am Main in August. Early in 1649 they returned to Cologne; by October they were in Danzig, and by December in Sweden, returning to Danzig in August 1650. Throughout the 1650s Frankfurt and the surrounding area formed the base for Jolly's touring enterprises, chiefly in the southern German-speaking territories. His company included a growing number of native German actors, and by 1654 actresses; at the same date he advertised plays and operas produced with Italianate scenery.¹⁵²

Indeed, although the English actress is often framed as a French import, this was not the only European country that had actresses, it was simply the country that the English court and the majority of the English exiles on the continent – although certainly not all – would have been in most contact with. As Deborah Payne Fisk notes, women were performing professionally in Spain by 1587, in Italy since the inception of *commedia dell'arte* and in Opera, and from the late sixteenth century in French provincial theatre and from the start of the Hôtel de Bourgogne in Paris in the early seventeenth century.¹⁵³ She argues that hostility and suspicion of the stage generally, and women acting on it specifically, was far more prevalent in Protestant countries because of 'sanctions against display and ostentation' and emphasis on 'sincerity – a correspondence between the inner and outer self – [which] rendered desire far more dangerous' even if it was not acted on.¹⁵⁴ On the other hand, Catholic theology did not consider desire in itself a sin, as long as the will to resist was not overcome and the desire acted on. Moreover, Fisk argues, the implications of women in theatre were different in these Catholic countries, where professional theatre companies tended to be made up of extended families rather than working individuals, meaning that unattached women in English and other Protestant traditions would be framed as available and on display, rather than the Catholic *femes covert* who were in companies with their fathers, husbands, or other members of their extended family.¹⁵⁵

Thus, certainly the beginning of women acting on the English professional stage was strongly linked to and heavily influenced by the contact of various powerful English people in continental Catholic countries during the 1650s, and indeed the increasingly Catholic sympathies of the Stuart kings. However, it would again be a mistake to consider that this was

¹⁵² Astington, John H., 'Jolly, George (*bap.* 1613, *d.* in or before 1683)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/67778>

¹⁵³ 'The Restoration Actress', in *A Companion to Restoration Theatre*, ed. by Susan J. Owen (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp.69-70.

¹⁵⁴ 'The Restoration Actress', p.71.

¹⁵⁵ 'The Restoration Actress', p.71.

entirely without precedent in the English tradition: women had acted in England before the wars in a variety of contexts, including aristocrats taking part in private performances, foreign women in travelling continental troupes performing professionally, and women from across the social strata taking part in all kinds of non-professional performance traditions such as ‘folk’ drama, guild drama and pageantry, as well as some evidence showing female professional itinerant performers who were musicians or circus performers.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, as James Stokes notes in an article on female performance in early modern England, women were an integral part of all kinds of English performance traditions, with the sole exception of theatrical participation in English professional troupes.¹⁵⁷ Additionally, Stokes has elsewhere argued that the general perception that women’s place in English theatrical traditions as peripheral is misguided and that ‘women’s contributions to early dramatic history in England need to be seen as much more significant than has hitherto been acknowledged or understood’.¹⁵⁸ This foundation of female performance in English culture argues for a cross-pollination between the French and English traditions that extends beyond simply a particular moment of influx and change to professional theatre in the early 1660s.

Moreover, while Protestant countries may have traditionally been more hostile to the stage in general and women on it in particular, this does not mean that there were no actresses in the Germanic countries which the English theatre professionals travelled in during the 1650s. On the contrary, as mentioned above, Jolly’s company included German actresses from 1654, and Ariana Nozeman, widely considered the first Dutch actress, is recorded as making her first performance at the Amsterdam theatre on June 30th, 1655. Tomlinson has argued for the particularly French associations of the actress, but this is due to Henrietta Maria and the influence of her feminocentric French court theatricals in the 1620s and 1630s rather than the cultural imports of the 1660s.¹⁵⁹ It may be that this previous association of women acting with France and other Catholic countries has been partly responsible for obscuring the fact that the travels and experiences of those who would later be responsible for driving English theatre practice were much broader than this, and thus developments such as female actors may also have been influenced by contact with German and Dutch theatre.

Thus while the birth of the English actress was to some degree a sudden development which happened in the first years of the 1660s, this can be qualified to a degree, as the origins of the tradition of women acting in England did happen over a considerably longer period – there

¹⁵⁶ James Stokes, ‘The Ongoing Exploration of Women and Performance in Early Modern England: Evidences, Issues, and Questions’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 33.1 (2015), pp.9-17. See also p.24 for further discussion and problematisation of the terms ‘folk drama’ or ‘traditional drama’, and how these may themselves marginalise women’s performance traditions.

¹⁵⁷ ‘The Ongoing Exploration of Women’, p.9.

¹⁵⁸ ‘Women and Mimesis in Medieval and Renaissance Somerset (and Beyond)’, *Comparative Drama*, 27.2 (1993), p. 176

¹⁵⁹ ‘She that plays the King’, esp. pp.195-198.

had been the influence of women in continental travelling troupes and private performances before the wars, female actors continued to be absorbed in the phenomenological experiences of those on the continent in the 1650s, and finally the advent of the English actress increased rapidly after the return of these individuals in the early 1660s.

One demonstrative piece of evidence that English drama did not fully absorb or mimic French traditions can be seen in the negative way some French commentators responded to English drama due to its failure to adhere to their conventions of a five act structure and strict generic forms. But again, it was not only French individuals who noted differences between English traditions. Conte Lorenzo Magalotti, travelling in England with Prince Cosmo III of Tuscany in 1669 commented that ‘the comedies which are acted, are in prose; but their plots are confused, neither unity nor regularity being observed; the authors having in view, rather than anything else, to describe accurately the passions of the mind, the virtues and the vices’.¹⁶⁰

In addition to Magalotti’s description and perhaps implied distaste for the differences between English and Italian play structure and style, he shows that many aspects of English theatregoing and practice seemed unusual to him, including men and women sitting ‘together indiscriminately’, the theatre being almost circular (a vestigial nod to English amphitheatres), and that music played beforehand. These observations may not seem especially notable, but Magalotti also comments on aspects which are frequently considered to be derived entirely from continental traditions, such as the structure of the theatre’s interior (the galleries being divided into boxes, surrounding the pit) and the scenery, which is ‘very light, and capable of a great many changes, and embellished with a beautiful landscape’.¹⁶¹ As such, English theatrical practice clearly did not simply become an imitation or emulation of continental practices, and the differences between the traditions were substantial enough to be notable to foreign visitors. Nevertheless, the English dramatic tradition certainly did develop due to the influences acquired by English exiles during the 1640s and 1650s. Their experiences of foreign theatrical practices and aesthetics would have influenced their understanding and expectations of what theatre could be: for those who were interested in theatre and involved in the English theatre in the 1660s, this would have a particularly notable impact on how theatrical practice developed later on, and so some of this development can be located at the point at which these individuals had these experiences, rather than when these influences first affected performance and design in English theatres. Furthermore, while the French theatre did have an impact, it is important to acknowledge the other continental influences which had in turn

¹⁶⁰ Conte Lorenzo Magalotti, *Travels of Cosmo the Third, Grand Duke of Tuscany, Through England, During the Reign of King Charles the Second (1669)* (London, 1821), cited in J. I. McCollum, *The Restoration Stage* (London: Greenwood P., 1973), p.124.

¹⁶¹ Conte Lorenzo Magalotti, *Travels of Cosmo the Third, Grand Duke of Tuscany, Through England, During the Reign of King Charles the Second (1669)* (London, 1821), cited in McCollum, p.124.

been absorbed into their drama, primarily from Italy. Moreover, I suggest that the influence of French drama is overstated at the cost of acknowledging the role of other European countries during this time, including the extensive experience of Protestant, Germanic countries by Killigrew and Jolly.

The memory of theatre in architecture

Back in London, dramatic tradition also survived in the existence of the buildings themselves: many playhouses were still extant and recognisable as the same buildings by 1660, and the collective memory of them as theatrical spaces is demonstrated by the fact that – as discussed in the previous section – many were still used for illicit performances, and quasi-theatrical purposes such as prize-fights or cock-fights. But I am arguing that memory of theatre performance and traditions due to architectural prompts went far beyond the duration of theatrical activity in an extant playhouse - there were memories and traces of dramatic tradition in just the remaining shells of theatrical buildings. The presence of these recognisable structures which had housed drama would have been enough to have prompted the memory of the theatrical experiences in the minds of many early modern Londoners, and the architectural contingency would have linked the continued development of new dramatic buildings in the 1650s and 1660s with previous examples of English playhouses based on more than just recollection.

Moreover, there was a great deal of continuity: most of the playhouses that were extant before the wars began stood in one form or another for most or all of the period between 1642 and 1660. The Globe may have been the first to disappear, possibly pulled down as early as 1644, and certainly by 1655, while the Hope seems to have been demolished in the 1650s, possibly in 1656 ‘to make tenements’.¹⁶² But the rest survived through to the Restoration, with the Fortune being demolished in 1661, while the buildings containing the second Blackfriars, Cockpit, Red Bull and Salisbury Court all continued some years longer. As such, in purely architectural terms the civil war did not cause any immediate change to the theatrical topography – indeed the single event that caused the biggest and most sudden change to the theatrical landscape was the Great Fire of London in 1666, which destroyed both Salisbury Court and the entire Blackfriars precinct, including the Upper Frater which had been the playhouse.

Rather than just becoming anonymous buildings after they ceased to be used for performance, there is evidence that playhouse spaces had a peculiarly strong hold on the public imagination

¹⁶² Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.610; p.597. The reliability of the document referring to the Hope is dubious as it was written by the forger J.P. Collier.

after their performative uses. In fact, the memory of a theatrical space often seems to have outlasted even the existence of the building itself, let alone the lifespan of performance or the recognisable internal playing space. As I will discuss in more detail in my next chapter, there is a reference to ‘the Curtain playhouse’ in 1698, long after the building has been converted into tenements and seventy five years after its last recorded use to stage a play. The last recorded performance at the second Fortune took place in 1649, when it may have also been ruined internally, but despite ‘being ruinous for lack of repair’ by 1656 the playhouse ‘refused to die in the mind’s eye. People thought in 1653 and 1658 that it would be refurbished.’¹⁶³ The Hope was probably demolished in the 1650s, but a bear-baiting arena was rebuilt on the land in 1663 which, as Berry also notes was still sometimes called the Hope, even though it had ‘nothing to do with plays’.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, the persistent memory of the buildings as theatrical spaces seems to account for the rationale behind using three of them as sites of performance again in the 1660s, despite the fact their stages and interiors were destroyed during raids in 1649, meaning that they probably did not have any inherent structural advantages over other buildings. These examples demonstrate the extraordinary transmission of the history of these spaces, and the resonances that remain with areas that have been used to perform drama. In each of the case study playhouses in this thesis it will become apparent that traces of the area as a theatrical topography resonated for an extraordinary length of time – even to the present day.

The memory of performance in printed theatrical texts

The pre-existing traditions of drama were also preserved through a surge in the publication of theatrical writing: it is probably due to the ‘extraordinary wealth of tragedies and comedies that came flooding from the printing houses during these eighteen years’ that many early modern plays are extant at all.¹⁶⁵ This publishing surge was perhaps due to the sudden necessity for people in the theatre industry to find a different source of income, or the increased popularity of playbooks for theatregoers who were no longer able to watch performances with the same ease and regularity, or without risking a fine. The former reason is corroborated by *Histrionia*, which states that:

Some [actors and theatre professionals] pickt up a little Money by publishing the Copies of Plays never before Printed, but kept up in Manuscript. For instance, in the Year 1652, *Beaumont and Fletcher’s Wild Goose Chase* was Printed in Folio, *for the Publick use of all the Ingenious*, (as the Title-page says) *and private Benefit of* John Lowin and Joseph Tayler, *Servants to his late Majesty*; and by them Dedicated *To the*

¹⁶³ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.639.

¹⁶⁴ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.597.

¹⁶⁵ Allardyce Nicholl, *A History of English Drama 1660-1900*, p.284.

Printing theatrical texts does not actually seem to have been suppressed at any point, although it has sometimes been assumed that the Parliamentary forces would have desired to do so.¹⁶⁷ This suggestion does not seem corroborated by any hard evidence, however, and as such seems to be a conclusion formed as a result of the political support for the royalist cause and condemnation of the Parliamentarians which characterises early- and mid-twentieth century scholarship. Louis B. Wright justifies the palpable *lack* of suppression of playbook printing by stating that 'the suppression of the sale and publication of playbooks had to defer to the more urgent necessity of hunting [...] news pamphlets which mercilessly flayed the enemies of the King'.¹⁶⁸ This is despite that fact that, as Wright also notes, none of the acts passed by Parliament to regulate printing 'singles out playbooks by name, and [Wright has] found no evidence that the authorities bestirred themselves to check the circulation of printed drama'.¹⁶⁹

Wright very much aligns this increase of dramatic printing with royalism, noting that 'most of the plays published during the Puritan revolution were filled with the conventions and atmosphere of a royalist background, or contained outspoken satire of the Puritans and their ideals'.¹⁷⁰ Certainly this is sometimes the case with newly written dramatic texts, as in the pamphlet-play *Mrs Cromwell's New Parliament*, which uses the dramatic form to lampoon Cromwell and Fairfax by showing their wives as dominant and sexually insatiable. Similarly, *A Tragi-Comedy in one act and in prose, called New-Market Fayre* ends with Cromwell and his followers ruined, before concluding '[w]ho lives by Treason thus by Treason dies', and falling on their swords.¹⁷¹

Moreover, some publishers of drama did indeed demonstrate a marked ideological commitment to the Royalist cause: Humphrey Moseley was a key figure in establishing the publication of individual dramatic canons, and the serial publication of octavo play collections, and the prefaces and epistles which he included in these volumes make his political leanings clear.¹⁷² The Royalist ideology of the commendatory verses in the 1647 Beaumont and Fletcher folio is so apparent that Wright argues it is virtually 'a literary manifesto of Cavalier writers'.¹⁷³ W. W. Greg notes that it was Moseley who was responsible for preparing this

¹⁶⁶ pp. 9-10.

¹⁶⁷ Louis B. Wright, 'The Reading of Plays during the Puritan Revolution', *The Huntington Library Bulletin*, 6 (1934), pp.74-75.

¹⁶⁸ 'The Reading of Plays', p.74.

¹⁶⁹ 'The Reading of Plays', p.74.

¹⁷⁰ 'The Reading of Plays', p.74.

¹⁷¹ *A Tragi-Comedy in one act and in prose, called New-Market Fayre, or a Parliament out-cry of state-commodities, set to sale* ([London(?]): 'you may go look' [n.pub.], 1649), p.8.

¹⁷² Robert Wilcher, 'Moseley, Humphrey (*b.* in or before 1603, *d.* 1661)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press (2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/19390>

¹⁷³ 'The Reading of Plays', p.82.

publication: while his partner Humphrey Robinson is also named on the title page he simply shared the financial burden, and thus it must be supposed that it was Moseley who determined on the inclusion of this material.¹⁷⁴

Nevertheless, although printed drama may to a degree have been used to as a medium to support the royalist cause, particularly under Humphrey Moseley's imprint, I would suggest that a large part of this influx of printing was also due to an aesthetic enjoyment of the theatre, and a way of accessing it after its availability had decreased. At the very least, the two must have gone hand-in-hand: as Robert Wilcher points out, it was Moseley's business acumen as a publisher and bookseller which prompted his innovative print formats, and as such I argue that even if the publications could support his political convictions he must have been largely prompted by a recognition of the potential market for drama.¹⁷⁵

The development of English theatrical traditions in newly written drama

As alluded to above, theatrical print culture in the middle of the century was not restricted to the publication of old plays as an alternative method of enjoying past theatrical performance: dramatic texts of various kinds continued to be written, including a continuation of closet drama and a proliferation of pamphlet plays.¹⁷⁶ There is very limited evidence of new plays being commissioned by private enterprises for intended public performance, as this would presumably have involved too much financial risk, although Davenant's hybrid operatic production *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* was advertised for performance at the Cockpit by the summer of 1658.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, Alfred Harbage's *Annals* cast a wide net to record all of the new plays, masques and other dramatic entertainments, irrespective of performance status. As such, while in the records from 1643-1659 there seem to have been few new plays *performed* in public playhouses, new dramatic pieces never cease to be *written*: Harbage's records show the following numbers across the years 1643-1659.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ W. W. Greg, 'Notes on Old Books: The Printing of the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio of 1642', *Library (Lond)*, 4-11.2 (1921) <doi: 10.1093/library/s4-II.2.109>, p.110.

¹⁷⁵ Wilcher, 'Moseley, Humphrey'.

¹⁷⁶ Janet Clare, *Drama of the English Republic 1649-1660* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p.2.

¹⁷⁷ *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru. Exprest by Instrumentall and Vocall Musick, and by Art of Perspective in Scenes, &c. Represented daily at the Cockpit in DRURY-LANE, At Three after noone punctually* (London: Henry Herringman, 1658), sig. A1^r.

¹⁷⁸ Alfred Harbage and S. Schoenbaum, *Annals of English drama, 975-1700: an analytical record of all plays, extant or lost* (London: Methuen, 1964)

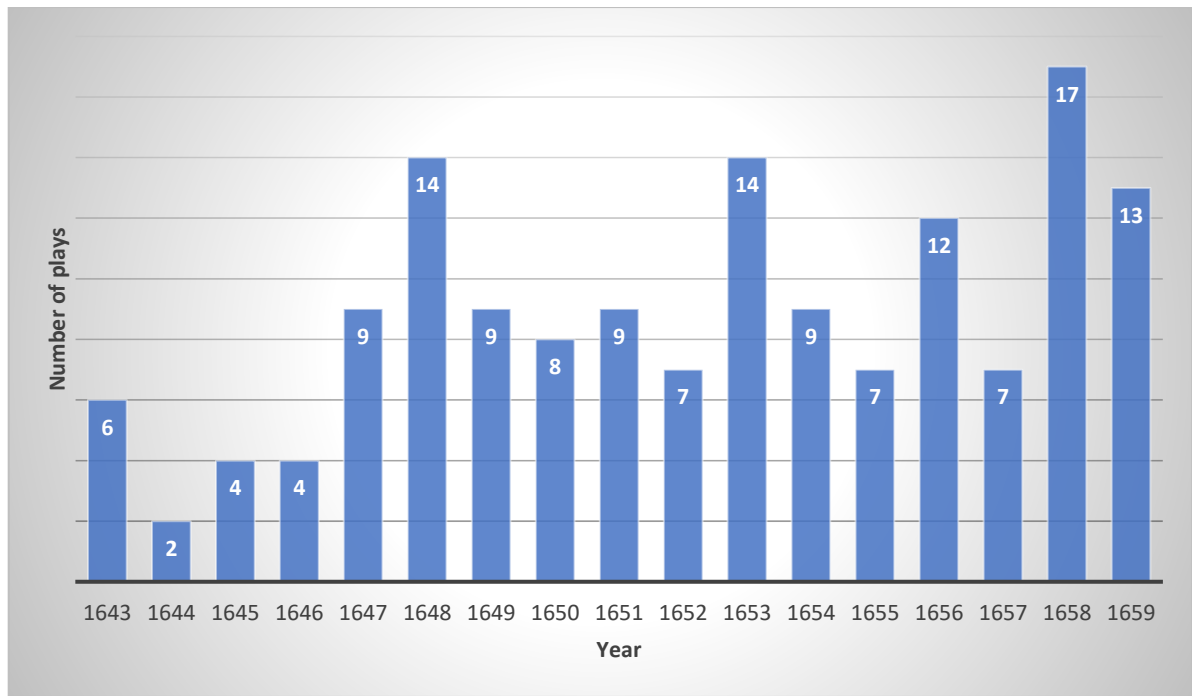


Figure 5. Graph to show total number of new plays and dramatic entertainments written 1643-1659

It is clear that, as might be expected, there are fewer plays written during the first civil war, although notably production does not fully cease, and a spike in 1648, which coincides with the second civil war and the lead up to Charles I's execution. The years of the Commonwealth show a higher output than the war years, with another increase after Oliver Cromwell's death when the established government began to destabilise and the possibility of another significant overhaul of the social order became likely.

These publications certainly show a development in English theatrical traditions as they used existing dramatic conventions while engaging with and responding to the new political climate: they were anything but ahistorical or situated solely in a former theatrical tradition. As Janet Clare notes, the pamphlet plays 'engaged with contemporary events, [while] the shaping of closet dramas as interventions in the cause of the Stuarts and the composition of ideologically nuanced tragicomedies meant the continuation of drama as a significant political medium.'¹⁷⁹ But this should not be taken as implying that all theatre was used in the royalist cause, or even contained royalist overtures. For one thing, there was also officially sanctioned Republican drama: Shirley's *Cupid and Death* was performed on behalf of the Commonwealth government, and 'Davenant's operas [...] were vetted by Thurloe, and Bulstrode Whitelocke'.¹⁸⁰ It is easy to overlook that not all of the dramatic performances which took place in the 1650s were illicit:

¹⁷⁹ *Drama of the English Republic*, p.2.

¹⁸⁰ Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.140.

in particular, works by Davenant and Shirley were performed with the full knowledge and approval of the State.¹⁸¹ Mostly these were not public performances, but private ones: Shirley's *Cupid and Death* was performed for the Portuguese ambassador in 1653, which Clare suggests marks 'a significant shift away from the anti-theatrical mentality of the Republic'.¹⁸² However, it was Davenant's suggestion to revive 'anti-Spanish rhetoric in the cause of colonial expansionism' which finally 'influenced the government's decision to sanction public performance', as the government saw the potential political utility, finally leading to the writing and performance of the *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* in 1658.¹⁸³

Of course, the shift away from an anti-theatrical mentality did not mean a passive acceptance of theatrical tradition from under the previous system of government: the 'curious phenomenon of a royalist culture in opposition produced both a striking adaptability in the theatrical organism, able to contain current events, folk celebrations and pamphleteers, and the negotiation of innovatory theatrical aesthetics and techniques designed to appeal to the ethos of the Republic'.¹⁸⁴ As such, this 'striking adaptability' demonstrates that theatrical traditions not only endured but developed during the Commonwealth period.

Conclusion

In conclusion, English theatrical traditions remained in the memory of early modern individuals through their lived experiences and memories of playgoing, and through the physical existence of most of the playhouse buildings which had existed in 1642. Dramatic traditions also continued through the printing of playbooks, which to a degree served as a documentation of performance practices, but also certainly ensured the preservation of the literary traditions of English drama.

More than being preserved in a state of stasis, however, traditions continued to develop through the writing of new dramatic texts, including satirical pamphlet plays, closet drama, official republican entertainments and plays which were written abroad, for example by Thomas Killigrew. Indeed, the presence of so many English nationals on the continent during this period, especially nobles and theatre professionals who influenced the course of English drama later on, shows that traditions were being influenced and absorbed from continental practice during this time – and I would suggest that this includes not just France, but also Italy, Germany and the Netherlands. All of this, of course, was in addition to the way that English

¹⁸¹ Clare, *Drama of the English Republic*, p.1.

¹⁸² Clare, *Drama of the English Republic*, p.2.

¹⁸³ Janet Clare, 'Countering Anti-theatricality: Davenant and the Drama of the Protectorate', in *The Oxford Handbook of Literature and the English Revolution*, ed. by Laura Lunger Knoppers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.504.

¹⁸⁴ Clare, *Drama of the English Republic*, p.1.

dramatic tradition continued and developed through official government performances, continued illicit playing in public playhouses and private or semi-public performances in the houses of the wealthy.

Chapter 3

The Curtain Playhouse

In accordance with the methodology I have outlined above, this chapter will be a case study of the Curtain playhouse which seeks to understand and critique how it has been treated in the canonisation of playhouse space. I will provide an overview of the work on the playhouse to date, compiling existing evidence as well as recently discovered information from the Museum of London Archaeology excavation in 2016, little of which has been formally incorporated into scholarship yet. I will also respond to the treatment of the Curtain in scholarship, suggesting it has been unfairly denigrated and marginalised in narratives of playhouse space, and that the reasons and evidence for doing so are not sufficient or valid.

This chapter will argue that the Curtain was innovative and architecturally unique because of its shape and construction methods, rather than the derivative response to the Theatre which has often been assumed. It will then reassemble a sense of the playhouse's unique aspects and identity from the evidence that exists and its known repertory, concluding that it had a particularly strong association with clowning, jiggling, and nationalistic plays.

1. Factual overview and existing scholarship

The Curtain playhouse was certainly open by December 1577, when it was mentioned by John Northbrooke as one of the places ‘whiche are made vppe and builded for such playes and enterludes, as the Theatre and Curtaine is’.¹⁸⁵ As such, it was very much part of the first generation of public playhouses in London, very likely preceded by the Red Lion (which opened in 1567) and the Bel Savage (1575, or earlier), and possibly by Newington Butts (between 1575 and May 1577), the Theatre (1576), and the Bull, the Cross Keys and the Bell, whose opening dates are uncertain but were probably relatively simultaneous (by 1577 or 1578).¹⁸⁶ The Curtain was situated in Shoreditch, just a few hundred yards outside the City of London boundary, and it continued to operate as a playhouse until c.1625.¹⁸⁷ After this it was used for fencing competitions and prize fights, and was still referred to as the Curtain playhouse in 1698, although by then it had been converted into residential properties.¹⁸⁸

The Curtain was an open-air playhouse which probably had three tiers of thatched galleries surrounding a yard, and was built around 200 yards away from the Theatre, which had been constructed in 1576. *English Professional Theatre* surmises that the two venues must have been of a similar size and capacity as in 1585 Henry Lanman, who owned the Curtain, and John Brayne and James Burbage, who owned the Theatre, agreed to pool and split the profits of the two venues between them equally.¹⁸⁹ However, this is not certain, as a contemporary report describes either the Curtain or Theatre as ‘magnificent in comparison with the other [and] this theatre can hold from 4 to 5,000 people’, implying that, if this is at all accurate, one of the two had a much larger capacity.¹⁹⁰

During its lifespan, the Curtain was home to a number of theatre companies: the Chamberlain’s Men played there from 1597 or 1598-1599 after the Theatre had closed and before they had finished constructing the Globe; the Queen’s Men occupied it from 1604-

¹⁸⁵ *A treatise against dicing, dancing, plays and interludes. With other pastimes. By John Northbrooke, minister. From the earliest edition, about A.D. 1577. With an introduction and notes* (London: F. Shoberl for The Shakespeare Society, 1843), p.85.

¹⁸⁶ Traditionally, the Curtain has been believed to have opened in 1577, see for example Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.404; Joseph Quincy Adams, *Shakespearean Playhouses: a History of English Theatres from the Beginnings to the Restoration* (Boston, N.Y.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917), p.77. More recently, certain critics have questioned the evidence for this, believing that it was more likely to have opened in 1576; see for example Douglas Bruster, ‘The birth of an industry’ in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre: Vol. 1: Origins to 1660*, ed. by Jane Milling and Peter Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.225. Interestingly, Chambers appears to have believed that the Curtain opened in 1576, although he still considers it to have followed the Theatre: see *Elizabethan Stage*, iv, p.269, p.298 and ii, p.402. Opening dates for the other playhouses listed have been taken from Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.290, p.295, p.320, p.330.

¹⁸⁷ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.404.

¹⁸⁸ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.418.

¹⁸⁹ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.406.

¹⁹⁰ L. Grenade, *The Singularities of London, 1578: Les Singularitez de Londres, noble, fameuse Cité, capital du Royaume d’Angleterre: ses antiquitez et premiers fondateurs*, ed. by Derek Keene and Ian Archer (London: London Topographical Society, 2014), p.78.

1607; and the Prince's Men from 1620-23.¹⁹¹ Nevertheless, these residencies account only for an extraordinarily short percentage of the playhouse's active life: the rest of its occupants are unknown, with only one play text – W. Smith's *The Hector of Germany* – referencing the venue on its title page and a few oblique accounts of its dramatic activity extant. Alongside theatrical productions, it occasionally housed prize-fights for the School of Defence between 1579 and 1583.¹⁹² It is generally believed that for the rest of its life it was used by numerous companies on a short-term basis and was available as a venue for hire. This probable business model has been interpreted as meaning that the venue was undesirable, and that this was resorted to only because no company could be prevailed upon to stay there.¹⁹³ This kind of negative reading of scant and inconclusive evidence is characteristic of the way the Curtain is generally interpreted on the occasions when it is discussed.

Indeed, of all the playhouses in the group which this thesis considers, the Curtain is one of the least frequently mentioned and studied: while it usually appears in compendiums and overview accounts of the playhouses in early modern London, frequently it is mentioned so briefly that no opinion of it is given. When conclusions are drawn, they tend to be negative ones, and gaps in the evidence are frequently filled in with negative conclusions: Adams suggests that we can 'reasonably suppose that the Curtain was in all essential details a copy of Burbage's Theatre', although he also assumes that it was probably smaller, and Chambers states that 'up to 1597 its history is little more than a pendant to that of the Theatre'.¹⁹⁴

The two key recent accounts of the Curtain are in *English Professional Theatre* and Stern's chapter 'The Curtain is Yours'. The former invaluable collates all the extant pieces of primary evidence relating to the playhouse, and it also provides from this a fact-based summary of the playhouse's building and use. Nevertheless, despite this emphasis on evidence, the volume does still offer the judgement that the Curtain 'was never one of the great playhouses', although the only rationale that is offered is that its 'use is as imperfectly known as its ownership'.¹⁹⁵ In contrast, Stern's article seeks to 'isolate the Curtain's uniqueness' and discover aspects such as its social situation and reputation.¹⁹⁶ As such, it is the first piece of scholarship to attempt to recreate a detailed rather than broad and stereotypical sense of the playhouse's identity. This is exceptionally useful, and many of Stern's conclusions are corroborated by my research, particularly the Curtain's emphasis on clowning and jiggling. The evidence from the commonplacing of plays viewed at the Curtain provides support for my

¹⁹¹ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.404.

¹⁹² *Early English Stages, 1300-1660*, 2 vols (London: Routledge, 1981), II, p.66.

¹⁹³ Adams, *Shakespearean Playhouses*, pp.88-89.

¹⁹⁴ *Shakespearean Playhouses*, p.77; *Elizabethan Stage*, II, p.402.

¹⁹⁵ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.406.

¹⁹⁶ 'The Curtain is Yours', in *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603: Material Practices and Conditions of Playing*, ed. by Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p.78.

suggestion that the Curtain did have a significant cultural impact, and demonstrates how it influenced peoples' lives and behaviour. Nevertheless, there are some aspects of the chapter which are influenced by the negative narratives surrounding the Curtain. While Stern champions study of the playhouse, noting that because it is not 'linked to a single company; it is the most ignored of the early modern London amphitheatres' she also follows some conventional narratives about the playhouse, implying that it was 'suffered' rather than 'desired', and suggesting that there was a 'Curtain effect' that was unappealing.¹⁹⁷ Later sections of this chapter will suggest that the evidence used in forming these conclusions is not sufficient to build this case.

Other work on the Curtain is very limited: Rosemary Linnell wrote a short volume solely about the playhouse in the 1970s, but it was for a general rather than academic readership, and as such is an elementary summary of existing information, and the artist's impression of the playhouse's appearance is too speculative to be useful.¹⁹⁸ A Masters thesis by Alan Taylor reconstructs the internal architecture of the Curtain by reading internal evidence from seven plays performed by the Chamberlain's Men. It argues that the stage and tiring-house façade were simple and that apparently complex plays could be staged in theatres with minimal decoration and stage properties. While these conclusions are eminently feasible, Taylor's methodology is prone to error, as reconstructing space from printed play texts necessarily ascribes an extremely close connection between the two distinct forms of consumable drama. In this instance, while the seven plays in the Chamberlain's Men's repertory which are discussed are likely – although not always certain – to have been performed at the Curtain, it does not mean that they were written with the space in mind, and it also relies on the idea that the surviving texts would exactly reflect the versions which were spoken on that stage, and that dramatic presentation could not have involved changes which did not exactly tally with the script.

Nevertheless, Taylor is unusual in arguing for the 'central importance of the Curtain to the history of Elizabethan theatre', and not simply because of its connection to Shakespeare.¹⁹⁹ Taylor rightly critiques the overextension of information from one playhouse to them all, and warns of the dangers of making comparisons between playhouses without adequate information. Yet he also claims the Curtain was 'typical', which on the evidence that he has available does not seem a possible conclusion to draw.²⁰⁰ As such, he suggests that the Curtain, rather than the Globe, was the 'archetypal' theatre.²⁰¹ While I empathise with an approach

¹⁹⁷ 'The Curtain is Yours', p.78, p.81.

¹⁹⁸ Rosemary Linnell, *The Curtain Playhouse* (London: Curtain Theatre Publication, 1977)

¹⁹⁹ Alan Taylor, 'The Curtain Playhouse, 1597-99' (unpublished Masters thesis, University of Alberta, Canada, 1977) p.v.

²⁰⁰ Taylor, 'The Curtain Playhouse', p.vi.

²⁰¹ Taylor, 'The Curtain Playhouse', p.117-118.

which attempts to de-centre the Globe in considerations of playhouse space, setting up an alternative archetype is equally problematic. Recent evidence from the excavation of the Curtain site confirms this scepticism: the way in which the Curtain was constructed by erecting new walls between existing ones seems to have been unique, and not to have been replicated in any other early modern playhouse.

The remaining scholarship on the space has attempted to ascertain the geographic location of the playhouse, which while important at the time of writing is not worth elaborating on extensively as the site has now been located and excavated. Nevertheless, in an article which addressed the architectural position and physical longevity of the playhouse building, Lucyle Hook suggests that the building did not actually stand until 1698, and may have disappeared before the Restoration, arguing that the name ‘the Curtain Playhouse’ simply attached itself to the surrounding area.²⁰² Hook’s conclusions are certainly feasible, but her argument has not been taken up by scholars since, and it does not seem possible to conclude with certainty either way. Nevertheless, it is clear that whether the playhouse building itself had been converted to tenements or was demolished with new buildings erected, the effect and ‘presence’ of the playhouse still haunted the area.

Despite the specifically architectural focus of the article, Hook still demonstrates a pejorative view of the playhouse, asserting that ‘the Curtain was of no great importance as a playhouse after 1600’.²⁰³ However, the only evidence provided for this is that in 1600 the Privy Council ordered that the Fortune could be built on the condition that playing ceased at the Curtain.²⁰⁴ But the order was never enacted, and this statement seems based only on the generally negative view of the Curtain in scholarship, and the tendency to attach disproportionate importance to the years it was occupied by the Chamberlain’s Men. As will be clear from my discussion of how playhouse importance can be fairly assessed in the first chapter, I do not consider the next 25 years of dramatic activity at the Curtain to be irrelevant because it was inhabited by less famous playing companies and there is little evidence remaining about what was performed there.

One significant reason for the dearth of critical information is the lack of remaining evidence about the playhouse. Writing less than five pages on the venue, Wickham concludes that ‘the rest is silence’.²⁰⁵ John Quincy Adams notes that there is less evidence remaining about the Curtain because it was not ‘like certain other playhouses, the subject of extensive litigation’.²⁰⁶ There are no papers or documents such as Henslowe’s Diary to give a detailed account from

²⁰² Lucyle Hook, ‘The Curtain’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 13.4 (1962), p.503.

²⁰³ Hook, ‘The Curtain’, p.501.

²⁰⁴ Hook, ‘The Curtain’, p.501.

²⁰⁵ *Early English Stages*, II, p.68.

²⁰⁶ *Shakespearean Playhouses*, p.78.

which to begin investigating, and much effort is required to establish even a partial repertory, as the Curtain is named only on the title page of a single play and was home to many companies rather than one long-standing one. In some cases, the lack of evidence regarding the Curtain seems to be down to sheer bad luck: James Boswell lists the actors of the five principle playing companies in 1622 but notes that it is incomplete with ‘that part of the leaf which contained the list of the king’s servants, and the performers at the *Curtain* is mouldered away.’²⁰⁷ Indeed, it is not certain who constructed the playhouse: an early landlord was a clothworker called Maurice Long, and an early owner was a yeoman of the Queen’s guard called Henry Lanman. Lanman is traditionally accredited with building the playhouse, but as Stern says ‘one or the other, or both, or someone else, may have commissioned as well as managed the playhouse.’²⁰⁸

The lack of records of the Curtain’s performances or operations as a business do not indicate a lack of contemporary popularity, but they do mean that writing about it in retrospect is much harder, and it can therefore seem an unappealing prospect, especially as there always remains a degree of uncertainty in any conclusions that can be drawn. But continuing to ignore the Curtain for this reason will only perpetuate the sense that there is not much to say about it, and that therefore it ‘was never one of the great playhouses.’²⁰⁹ Furthermore, while writing about the Curtain is a difficult prospect, its under-representation is due to more than this. As I have argued, the hierarchisation of playhouse space has led to dismissal of playhouses which are not perceived to be of a serious or worthy nature. While this might be defended along lines of artistic value, it is difficult to deny that class bias has been a significant factor in these distinctions. Ironically, the distinctions between the ‘elite’ and ‘citizen’ playhouses have often been incorrect, or at least exaggerated, since the early modern theatre industry demonstrated far too much mobility of actors and writers between companies and of companies between playhouses to have been able to create a stratified two-tier system.

²⁰⁷ Edmund Malone and James Boswell, *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare with the corrections and illustrations of various commentators*, III (London: C. Baldwin, 1821), p.60.

²⁰⁸ Stern, ‘The Curtain is Yours’, p.80.

²⁰⁹ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.406.

2. Reinterpreting the evidence and reassessing the Curtain's importance

Despite its generally poor treatment, there are a multitude of reasons for the importance of the Curtain in the early modern theatrical landscape. *English Professional Theatre* convincingly demonstrates that in the sixteenth century (from 1577 until at least the early 1590s, if not later) the Theatre and Curtain were frequently used as a metonym for all playhouses, by which time there were eight others operating. I argue that this demonstrates a central position in the early modern conceptualisation of what theatre itself was, and the volume concurs that: '[t]he Theatre and the Curtain evidently caught the public imagination as other playhouses did not'.²¹⁰ Furthermore, as the graphs in Chapter 1 demonstrate, the Curtain's longevity was unrivalled, operating as a playhouse for nearly fifty years and standing as a building for at least 121 years. Indeed, Wickham has defended the worth of the Curtain on these lines, suggesting that the Curtain rather than the Globe represents the 'fluid and advancing tradition of English dramaturgy'.²¹¹

The Curtain's bad reputation fits in to a wider narrative that suggests outdoor playhouses became old fashioned and out-dated when small, expensive indoor theatres appeared, and were left as peripheral outposts of bawdy, unsophisticated entertainment for the masses. This narrative is difficult because many of the facts it interprets are true: there demonstrably was a decline in outdoor playhouses across the seventeenth century. There was also a progression towards elitism (in terms of who theatre was designed for and consumed by) over this period which has in some respects endured to the modern day. Nevertheless, this narrative often hinges on a notion that indoor playhouses were 'better': they were more sophisticated and developed, and audiences inevitably understood this. As such, the only people who would still be attracted to the roughness and unsophistication of amphitheatres would also have those things as personal qualities. However, assuming class tastes and distinctions between different types of entertainment and reading modern perspectives back onto the class structures and tastes of the past can be prone to error. Julie Sanders uses bear baiting to demonstrate crossover between high and low dramatic forms: she notes that in a letter Thomas Wentworth described a situation as representing 'unto me the Sport of whipping the Blind Bear (not that of Sir Arthur Ingram's, but the other of Parish Garden)' and that 'polar bear cubs [...] are known to have been presented to King James VI and I at Whitehall but appear to have ended up residing in the Bankside bear houses'.²¹² Thus, she concludes that there was 'a definite

²¹⁰ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.408.

²¹¹ *Early English Stages*, II, p.67.

²¹² *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama, 1620-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p.3, p.6.

crossover between high and low culture, between the private consumption of courts and aristocratic country estates and the public commercial space of the Paris Garden'.²¹³

Knutson also warns against conflating class and taste in 'What If There Wasn't a "Blackfriars Repertory"?'²¹⁴. The article challenges the notion that the King's Men had a dual repertory: one for the Blackfriars and one for the Globe, which were divided according to the differences between the stage spaces and between the wealth and therefore assumed entertainment preferences of their audiences. Knutson accurately criticises correlating taste and intelligence, and I would agree with her conclusion that there can be a danger of this in narratives of early modern drama, which inevitably biases the conclusions that are formed.²¹⁴ Such positions are rarely explicit in recent scholarship, and the leaps which are made are smaller. However, I suggest that one reason for the continuation of subtle assumptions made on this basis is that taste and socio-economic status are still perceived to have a strong correlation.

The Red Bull has been the subject of dismissal and oversimplification in a similar manner to the Curtain, and critics have recently been working to re-evaluate and nuance its depiction.²¹⁵ Munro has noted that the stereotypical view of the playhouse as a 'low-status home of low-brow entertainment' is complicated by the fact that companies moved between the Red Bull and the Cockpit/ Phoenix or Salisbury Court, and that Massinger and Heywood both had plays successfully performed there.²¹⁶ In her monograph on the Red Bull, Griffith highlights that 'critics, for a long time, have loved to see this playhouse, its company, its repertoire and its audience in a certain mindset'; I suggest that the treatment of the Curtain demonstrates similar oversimplification.²¹⁷ Ingram, in an essay on Newington Butts, another very early playhouse about which even less is known, notes that 'we have a fair sense of the history of only one of the early playhouses, the Theatre; of the other two which were its pre-1580 contemporaries, the Curtain and the playhouse at Newington Butts, our information is so meager as to prevent any generalized impression from forming'.²¹⁸ While Ingram's assessment of the knowledge available about the spaces is largely correct, I would suggest that an impression of the Curtain *has* formed: namely, that it was rough and artistically lacking. While Newington Butts is also understudied due to a lack of evidence, there is such an almost complete absence that no narrative at all has been able to be constructed – although this may be beginning to change

²¹³ *Cultural Geography*, p.6.

²¹⁴ In *Inside Shakespeare*, ed. by Paul Menzer (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2006), p.57.

²¹⁵ See especially Griffith, *A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse*; Mark Bayer, 'The Red Bull Playhouse', in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Richard Dutton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Rory Loughnane, 'Reputation and the Red Bull Theatre, 1625–42' in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 44.1 (2014).

²¹⁶ Lucy Munro, Anne Lancashire, John Astington, and Marta Straznicki, 'Popular Theatre and the Red Bull' in *Early Theatre* 9.2 (2006), pp.100-101.

²¹⁷ *A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse*, p.16.

²¹⁸ 'The Playhouse at Newington Butts: A New Proposal', *SQ*, 21.4 (1970), p.385.

with the recent publication of Laurie Johnson's article arguing that the venue was named 'the Playhouse', and was in close proximity to a long-established archery butts.²¹⁹ The Red Bull has also acquired a bad reputation, but because much more extant evidence relates to it, it has been possible to challenge and re-evaluate this. The Curtain is in an unfortunate position in between the two: little evidence, but enough to construct some sort of narrative, which has been a derogatory one. As there is not a substantial amount of new evidence about the playhouse, other than the findings from the excavation, it is most useful to query aspects of the current narrative of the space, evaluate the evidence that has led to this conclusion, and offer caveats, criticisms and new possibilities. Further, in the last section of this chapter, conclusions about its unique identity will be drawn by examining the repertory of the Curtain, which hitherto has not been considered as a whole.

The Curtain's business model of operating as a venue for hire rather than home to a fixed company is one aspect of the playhouse's operations which has been read as indicating a lack of success and artistic integrity: this assumes that having one fixed acting company was preferable for a playhouse and the Curtain did not because no company wanted to play there. Yet, there is no overwhelming reason to assume this, particularly if 'audiences proved more loyal to the playhouses than to individual companies and their repertories'.²²⁰ Stern suggests that the Chamberlain's Men were eager to escape the Curtain even though 'the Lanham agreement had given them rights to the playhouse'.²²¹ In fact there is nothing in Lanham's account that suggests he gave Burbage and Brayne the right to occupy the Curtain, they merely agreed to split the profits from the two houses. If this was the case, the Chamberlain's Men received half a playhouse's profits after the Theatre closed, and since they did not own shares in the Curtain, may have had to either pay to hire it or give an additional percentage of the takings, as other companies presumably would have done. Indeed, since Lanham is only known for certain to have owned the playhouse until 1592, the agreement may not even have been in place when the Chamberlain's Men were resident.²²² As such, it is equally or more likely that the impetus to build their own playhouse stemmed from the desire to make more profit rather than a dislike of their current performance space. Their dislike, or at least lack of belief in the venue's profitability, cannot have been that strong as after they had stopped performing there members of the Chamberlain's/King's Men procured shares in the Curtain: Thomas Pope owned a share in 1603, John Underwood owned a share as late as 1624.²²³ There is no evidence that the Curtain was in dire financial straits, as evidenced by its continued operation: had it struggled to find companies to perform there or audiences to attend, it would

²¹⁹ 'The Two Names of Newington Butts', *SQ*, 68.2 (2017), esp. pp.193-196.

²²⁰ Gurr, *Shakespearean Playing Companies*, p.437; Wickham, *Early English Stages*, II, p.67.

²²¹ 'The Curtain is Yours', p.81.

²²² Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatres*, p.406.

²²³ Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, p.403.

surely have converted to another use, as it eventually did in 1625. Its continued existence and operation demonstrates a basic level of profitability.

Moreover, references to the Theatre and Curtain's mutual financial arrangement usually imply in their phrasing that the Theatre had the agency over the Curtain in the two playhouses' decision to form a profit sharing arrangement.²²⁴ But there is little to suggest this: in his account of the agreement, Henry Lanham, the Curtain's owner, states that 'Burbage and Braynes taking the Curten as an Esore to their playe housse did of ther own mocion move this Deponent that he wold agree that the proffittes of the said ij Playe howses might for vij yeres space be in Dyvydent between them'.²²⁵ If we can believe Lanham's account, it is Burbage and Brayne who are in need of something from the Curtain: they are taking it as an 'easer' to the Theatre, implying it was providing them some kind of relief, almost certainly financial. There even seems to be a hint of persuasion needed if they had to 'move' Lanham so 'that he wold agree'. In any case, if Burbage and Brayne were the instigators of the profit-sharing agreement it demonstrates that they felt it advantageous to have a stake in the Curtain being successful. This may have been a kind of insurance for either party: revenue problems for one playhouse would be alleviated by the profits of the other. Or it could have been that the owners of the Theatre suspected the Curtain may become more profitable than them, meaning that splitting the takings would be financially advantageous. History is written by, or on behalf of, the winners, and the Chamberlain's Men certainly were that in the long run. Although they did become the most important company at some point in the seventeenth century, it is their subsequent reputation as the company of Shakespeare that has elevated them so far above their contemporaries. It is far from certain that they were the premier playing company at this point in time, rather than one of the groups in a young and rapidly evolving industry.

Another way in which the taste and morality of the Curtain has been questioned is by linking it to sexual deviance. Stern argues that it had a particular link to sexual activity in the mind of the early modern individual, based on contemporary reports of individuals repeating lines they had heard at the Curtain and other playhouses for flirtation, and that Simon Forman went there to see a woman and then led her through the surrounding fields.²²⁶ He returned to the Curtain soon after to meet her uncle to see if he would help him with his suit, but did not have the courage to raise the issue. I am not convinced that this evidence does link the Curtain to promiscuity: Forman's wording is ambiguous and it is at least equally feasible that his desire was to marry the woman. It would have been relatively risky and unusual – although not unheard of – to approach an uncle to get sexual access to his niece. While the sexual reputation of the Curtain and its surroundings have been emphasised, this is not an isolated

²²⁴ See for example: Stern, 'The Curtain is Yours', pp.80-81; Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, p.402.

²²⁵ NA, C24/226/11[PT 1] cited in Stern, 'The Curtain is Yours', p.80.

²²⁶ 'Curtain is Yours', pp.81-83.

phenomenon. Outdoor playhouses in particular are frequently linked to prostitution and thefts, and referred to with negative terms such as ‘dangerous’, ‘seedy’, ‘licentious’ or ‘of ill repute’. One example of this is when Hotson notes the presence of ‘Mrs Mails by the Curtain playhouse’ in a documentary record entitled ‘Common Whores, Wanderers, Pick-Pockets and Night-walkers’. Although the language of the title is from the period, the bias in the reporting is displayed by Hotson referring to the list as ‘unsavoury’.²²⁷ Further, these observations are somewhat too isolated and decontextualized in the proofs they purport to offer, and subtly feed into a skewed picture that readers and scholars construct in imagining the various playhouses. Modern moral judgements such as these can interfere with understanding early modern milieus. Although, of course, early modern society made moral judgements about certain behaviours, if our assumptions about those are unthinking we run the risk of distorting the complexity of beliefs, or imposing anachronism: prostitution, for example, was probably far more visible in early modern times than it is now, and contact with it may not have had the same shock value as it would for many modern individuals.²²⁸

While trends of increased theft and prostitution at larger outdoor theatres is probably accurate – although the evidence is not complete enough for certainty – this requires further critical thought rather than being observed but left uncontextualized, allowing under-considered assumptions about cause and effect. Prostitution, theft and visible forms of crime generally have a much higher incidence in deprived and impoverished areas and social groups. Outdoor playhouses were generally situated in poorer areas, whereas indoor theatres were in more affluent areas (although significantly, much to the distaste of Blackfriars residents). Thus, it is feasible that this trend was linked not to something originating from the culture of the playhouses themselves, but from the socio-economic conditions of their surroundings. Further, as outdoor playhouses were often built in areas that had pre-existing reputations for these kinds of deviance, it seems likely that they too would become embedded in that milieu. This could have been partly by design of the impresarios building the venues, but was probably serendipitous due to the necessity of choosing liberties to build them in. Liberties, as areas outside the control of the city of London, had higher levels of social deviance, irrespective of whether they were home to a playhouse.²²⁹ The language used when describing these areas, and the playhouses in them, can also be unconsidered: to refer to them as ‘seedy’ or ‘dangerous’, while not necessarily incorrect exactly, is reductive and risks using these terms purely based on distinctions of socio-economic class. Sometimes, these loaded terms seem to simply operate as synonyms for ‘poor’.

²²⁷ *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.92.

²²⁸ Duncan Salkeld highlights the ubiquity of prostitution in early modern London in *Shakespeare Among the Courtesans: Prostitution, Literature and Drama, 1500-1650* (London: Routledge, 2016), see esp. pp.2-4.

²²⁹ Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage*, p.57.

In a speculative, but hopefully useful attempt to consider the reasons early modern individuals made decisions on a day-to-day basis, it seems logical that a sex worker would prefer not to travel a long way to look for clients, particularly if she worked in brothel nearby. Someone intending to steal purses would probably want to pay as little as possible – perhaps a penny to stand in an amphitheatre rather than six for a cheap seat indoors. Not only that, but it would be much easier to steal in a large, densely packed group of people standing than with everyone sat down and you unable to move freely without looking suspicious. Which, as well as being appealing for planned theft, probably resulted in opportunistic theft as well. So it is possible to note the higher presence of prostitution and theft at outdoor playhouses and the areas surrounding them without reading it as a reflection on the class and moral composition of their audiences. In terms of prostitution, however, the same considerations are perhaps not true of clients. If a sex worker's prerogative is to find clients and this can be done near their workplace having paid cheap admission at say, the Curtain, then they are likely to choose this option. Prospective clients of sex workers may have more complex considerations. If sex workers are not as easy to find at an indoor playhouse, they may be inclined to go somewhere that they can both watch a play and procure sex. For some there could also be the consideration of discretion: many would want to minimise chances of being seen by neighbours, friends or spouses, and so distance from their residence may provide more anonymity. Similarly to bear-baiting, the clients of sex workers were not restricted to the poorer members of society, although there may be a tendency to make this association. Indeed, if Stern's assessment of Forman's intention to procure extramarital sex is correct, he is a good example of this: by 1599 Forman was very wealthy, having accumulated £1200, and would marry the daughter of a knight that same year.²³⁰ Whether he was seeking sex or marriage, Forman also demonstrates that those with a vested interest will travel: at this point he lived in Lambeth, which is south of the river, so it is perhaps interesting that he chose to travel to Shoreditch rather than go to the Rose on the Southbank. If Stern's assessment is not correct, and he was indeed seeking to marry the woman, then suddenly this piece of evidence says something quite different about the Curtain. It becomes a venue that a well off, middling class person would meet to arrange a marriage match. This ought to complicate and nuance our understanding of the Curtain's reputation, suggesting it was a more interesting and varied cultural entity than has been thought.

A key problem with the rigidity of the narratives surrounding the Curtain is that beliefs about the playhouse can be projected back onto plays associated with them. *Henry V* is a particularly clear example of how much the reading of texts can differ depending upon the playhouse they are believed to have been performed in or written for. The ubiquitous reading of the prologue

²³⁰ Lauren Kassell, 'Forman, Simon (1552–1611)', in *ODNB*, Oxford University Press (2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/9884>

to *Henry V* has been that its references to the ‘unworthy scaffold’ and suggestion of rustic simplicity in labelling the playhouse a ‘wooden O’ were false modesty on the part of Shakespeare and the Chamberlain’s Men, who were extremely proud of the new Globe. T.W. Craik in the Arden 3 edition suggests the ‘derogatory remarks about the playhouse [...] would have had a humorous point when applied to a scaffold that the Lord Chamberlain’s Men did not think in the least unworthy.’²³¹ Re-dating of the play then suggested that it would have originally been performed at the Curtain just before the Chamberlain’s Men left in 1599, a space which was also believed to fit with the polygonal shape of the ‘wooden O’ but was not believed to evoke the same pride or sense of desirability. With the Curtain believed to be the performance space, new readings suggested the exact opposite; that the prologue is a sincere complaint by Shakespeare and the Chamberlain’s Men about having to perform at a venue as unpleasant as the Curtain.²³² As such, the scaffold is genuinely ‘unworthy’, and the potentially negative connotations of the ‘wooden O’ are intentional.

The uncertainty around the original performance venue of *Henry V* has been complicated by the fact that different prologues were often written for different performance spaces or revived productions. It has therefore been suggested that the prologue’s absence from Q1 and Q2 means it was not performed until later than the first performances, or at all. Richard Dutton argues that the chorus’s reference to the ‘General of our gracious Empress’ may not be a reference to Essex, as commonly believed, but to his successor as Lord Deputy in Ireland, Lord Mountjoy, and that as such the Folio version (including the prologue) probably dates from after the latter’s success at the Battle of Kinsale in 1601, rather than from 1599.²³³ Conversely, James Bednarz argues that the prologue was performed in 1599, but nevertheless this does not mean that it certainly was part of the premiere at the Curtain, since the Globe was ‘probably complete or nearly so by 16 May 1599’.²³⁴ Thus, it would be possible for the play to be performed at the Curtain without the prologue, then at the Globe with the prologue in the same year.

The question of which space the prologue refers to appears to have now been cleared up by the excavation of the Curtain site. Since the Curtain was previously believed to be circular – and thus a possible candidate for the structure referred to by the ‘wooden O’ – the MOLA’s discovery in 2016 that the Curtain was a rectangular playhouse makes it hard to dispute that the prologue at least was written for the later performances at the Globe. While ascertaining

²³¹ Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, ed. by T. W. Craik (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p.5.

²³² Stern, ‘The Curtain is Yours’, p.88.

²³³ “Methinks the truth should live from age to age”: The Dating and Contexts of *Henry V*, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 68.1-2 (2005), pp. 196-199.

²³⁴ “When Did Shakespeare Write the Choruses of *Henry V*?”, *Notes and Queries*, 53.4 (2006), 486-489 <<https://doi-org.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/10.1093/notesj/gjl166>>; Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.493.

members of the Curtain's repertory and the performance history of different versions of *Henry V* is clearly important, it may be more revealing to consider how textual evidence and scholarly beliefs can be read back onto performance spaces in a biased way. Reading the prologue when it *was* believed to have been written for the Curtain as a lament against the inadequacies of the performance space overlooks the speech's wider rhetorical construction. It is a metatheatrical musing on the inadequacy of theatrical representation of historical events. To some degree it is simply an extended method of fulfilling one of the early modern prologue's most frequent functions: apologising for the play to gain the audience's indulgence. Reading closely, the 'inadequacies' referred to include not only the space, but also the acting, writing, the time constraints, the props and costumes, and indeed even the audience themselves. Further, the invocation to '[a]dmit me Chorus to this history' recognises the compromises involved in attempting to stage a true story.²³⁵ Simply by being inserted into the narrative to excuse deficiencies, fill in gaps and link events together, the Chorus who speaks the prologue has a further negative impact on the play's verisimilitude. These anxieties are not unique to *Henry V*, also occurring, for example, in *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*, which was first performed by Queen Anne's Men in 1607 and uses a Chorus as it attempts to stage passing through time and vast swathes of space. Indeed, Dutton posits that the reason 'the choruses in particular seem apologetic, self-conscious of inadequacies' is due to the outdatedness of the chronicle history genre: it is 'as if [they] aware that this was a mode that had outlived its era'.²³⁶

Noting the historical inaccuracy implicit in the recreation of past events is coupled with recognition of the inaccuracy of compressing time: the audience's imagination is invested with the power to help the company turn 'th'accomplishment of many years/ Into an hour-glass' (30-31), as well as account for the deficiencies in props and costumes. The audience are required to '[t]hink, when we talk of horses, that you see them' (26) and told it is their 'thoughts that now must deck our kings' (28). Despite this, the audience are themselves lacking. Wishing for 'monarchs to behold the swelling scene' (4) suggests that as the audience are not the original witnesses of the events – including Henry V and Charles VI – they themselves are contributing to the lack of authenticity. Of course, this is all a rhetorical device which reflects on the nature of theatre. It laments that it is impossible to exactly recreate the past, or watch things that have already happened. Of course, this is impossible: even in an age of video, watching a screen with recorded footage of a historical event would, by the scrupulous standards of *Henry V*'s prologue, be lacking. This is precisely why this speech is only ostensibly self-deprecating and the problems cited are not actual deficiencies. Shakespeare is not feeling insecure about his talent when he wishes for 'a muse of fire, that would ascend/

²³⁵ *Henry V*, ed. by T. W. Craik, Prologue line 32. Subsequent line numbers in brackets.

²³⁶ 'The Dating and Contexts of *Henry V*', p. 184.

'The brightest heaven of invention' (1-2) and so make these impossibilities possible, but it does make his writing as culpable as every other element conspiring to mean that the play will not be the actual historical event repeating itself.

It is true that each of these elements are only referred to once or twice each, whereas the inadequacies of the location are alluded to multiple times. They would need '[a] kingdom for a stage' (3) rather than 'this unworthy scaffold' (10) and defeat is implicit when asking '[c]an this cockpit hold/ The vasty fields of France?' (11-12). The 'girdle of these walls' (19) suggests the theatre is constricting, and lack of space is again highlighted by asking 'may we cram/ Within this wooden O the very casques/ That did affright the air at Agincourt?' (11-14). (Although it should be noted that it is not just the size of the wooden O that is causing this inadequacy: the casques must be the 'very' ones which were originally used, which were presumably impossible to obtain.) Do these more frequent references to space imply that the playhouse was *particularly* inadequate – more so than the inaccuracy of time, writing, props, costumes, and the presence of an audience? Perhaps, although as Craik acknowledges, these remarks 'would apply to any playhouse as regards staging the unstageable'.²³⁷ Moreover, there are an equally large number of references to the 'inadequacy' of the actors. They lack 'princes to act' (3) and ask pardon for the 'flat unraised spirits that hath dared/ On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth/ So great an object' (9-11). It is worth noting that the infamous 'unworthy scaffold' is operating as a subordinate clause within the larger idea of actors daring to present kings. Where they are doing this, and the fact that it too is unworthy, is an additional rather than central fault. Not only this, but the audience are required to '[p]iece out our imperfections' (23), make up for the inadequate number in the company: '[i]nto a thousand parts divide one man' (24), and compensate for the actors' lack of true power by making 'imaginary puissance' (25). It is not only the actors' numbers that are lacking but also their physicality, as 'a crooked figure may/ Attest in little place a million' (15-16). The actors are merely 'ciphers to this great account' (17), and Craik glosses 'ciphers' as noughts or zeros. As Stern proposes that the 'O' of the 'wooden O' is 'simultaneously a sigh and a wooden naught' there is an interesting parallel in the way that the actors and playhouse are configured as insignificant or without value.²³⁸ Depending on how these references are counted, there are between five and seven mentions of the inadequacies of the actors, and five about the inadequacy of the space, demonstrating that the Chamberlain's Men were no more unhappy with their performance venue than with themselves.

I have tried to demonstrate more generally that the prologue's purpose is not to point out true deficiencies, but to act as a rhetorical device which is contemplating the nature of

²³⁷ Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, p.5.

²³⁸ 'The Curtain is Yours', p.88.

performance. It would require contortions of logic to rationalise why the attack was sincere in regard to the playhouse but not the actors and other aspects. Bednarz corroborates this reading, arguing that the prologue in *Henry V* and Dekker's *Old Fortunatus* oppose Phillip Sidney's criticism of contemporary English playwrights for not ensuring the action of the drama obeys classical unities by taking place in a single day and single place.²³⁹ He suggests these two rules became 'symbolic of the kind of rigorous self-discipline literary theoreticians claimed might help turn drama into high art.'²⁴⁰ As such, the *Henry V* prologue works hard to justify breaking the 'prescriptive neoclassical rules that early modern literary critics generated to discipline popular drama'.²⁴¹

Even if the prologue was not a rhetorical device and the references to the playhouse could be read as true indicators of its physical state, reading the descriptions counterintuitively when applied to the Globe but as genuinely derogatory in reference to the Curtain demonstrates the endemic bias involved in reading playhouse spaces back onto texts, based on what we supposedly already know about the playhouse. These proofs are then reabsorbed back into the evidence 'against' the Curtain, creating a circular source of evidence:

1. The Curtain is believed to have been inadequate (despite a lack of solid evidence).
2. *Henry V* is believed to have been originally performed at the Curtain. Therefore the prologue is sincere in its attack on the inadequacies of the performance space, because (1.) the Curtain is believed to have been inadequate.
3. The Curtain was inadequate because it is described as such by the *Henry V* prologue.

In addition to neutral evidence being interpreted negatively, there have also been some pieces of positive evidence whose implications are overlooked when imagining and describing the Curtain. Some contemporary reports were complimentary about the building, but it is not often highlighted that the playhouse may have had a positive aesthetic value in accordance with Johannes de Witt's 1596 statement that London has 'four amphitheatres of obvious beauty', meaning the Theatre, Curtain, Rose and Swan.²⁴² Further, consideration of Grenade's description of the Curtain and Theatre as 'two very fine theatres' tends to focus not on this universal positive but on ascertaining which is the one that is 'magnificent in comparison with the other and has an imposing appearance on the outside'.²⁴³ Although it is unclear which of the playhouses Grenade considers superior, it has widely been assumed to refer to the Theatre.

²³⁹ 'Dekker's Response to the Chorus of *Henry V* in 1599', *Notes and Queries*, 59.1 (2012), <<https://doi-org.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/10.1093/notesj/gjr225>>, p.65.

²⁴⁰ 'Dekker's Response to the Chorus', p.65.

²⁴¹ 'Dekker's Response to the Chorus', p.65.

²⁴² Library of the University of Utrecht, Ms Var. 355, fos. 131v-32, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.441.

²⁴³ *The Singularities of London*, 1578, p.78.

Ingram warns against a tendency to over-extend what is known about the Theatre to the Curtain and Newington Butts as well, which leads to assumptions that the Theatre was ‘typical’ of the earliest London theatres because it is the only one we know much about. This can then lead to the assumption – permitted by the lack of evidence either way – that the Curtain’s physical appearance was unoriginal and derivative: that it was ‘imitative enough not to be striking’.²⁴⁴ Ingram states that to ‘counteract this tendency we must seize every opportunity to extend our knowledge of the other two houses’.²⁴⁵ Assuming that the facts about one venue apply to all playhouses grouped together as of that ‘kind’ risks creating resistance to other theories and evidence about how those playhouses looked and operated: differences appear to be irregularities, when actually they were all variations in a young and rapidly changing industry. The differences between playhouses were not necessarily deviations from the ‘norm’, which is usually considered to be the Theatre, Globe or Blackfriars depending on the context. In part, this homogenisation is due to the modern reconstruction of the Globe. *Shakespeare’s Globe Rebuilt* acknowledges that although ‘it is sometimes thought that the Globe typifies the theatre spaces of Shakespeare’s England’ in reality ‘even among the arena theatre-type to which the Globe belongs there was in reality wide variation in size and structural arrangements’, and as Stern notes ““reconstructed” replicas give early modern playhouses a static permanence that their real counterparts never had’.²⁴⁶ Despite this, it is hard to have the imaginative faculties not to assume that the structure that stands in London today is both accurate and more broadly representative, and this is subtly made apparent when we try to conceive of what other early modern amphitheatres looked like.

It would instead be possible to see the Curtain as a forerunner and innovator in the theatre industry rather than aesthetically lacking and responsive to changes within it: a sympathetic reading of its architectural differences could produce strikingly different results. It was the first playhouse which is known to have been thatched – now commonly considered the ‘archetypal’ type of playhouse roof – while the Theatre was tiled. The next outdoor playhouse to be built was the Rose, which was almost certainly thatched: Henslowe records nine different instances of paying money to a thatcher in 1592.²⁴⁷ De Witt’s sketch of the Swan suggests that it too was thatched, and the first Globe was as well. Famously, it was due to the thatch that the Globe caught fire in 1613, and the King’s Men returned to a tiled roof again when building the second Globe. Of course, this is far from meaning that the Curtain alone inspired the trend of thatching in playhouse design: it was a common feature, and factors such as financial concerns must have played a part. But it is certainly possible that the Curtain

²⁴⁴ Stern, ‘The Curtain is Yours’, p.78.

²⁴⁵ ‘The Playhouse at Newington Butts’, p.385.

²⁴⁶ J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring, eds., *Shakespeare’s Globe Rebuilt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.16; ‘The Curtain is Yours’, p.77.

²⁴⁷ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.427.

influenced subsequent playhouse design, and it is as necessary to consider this possibility as for any other playhouse.

The tendency to view the Curtain as derivative originates mainly from the fact that it was built so near to the Theatre, and the belief that it was built soon afterwards. There is obviously a connection between the location of the two houses, and if the Curtain was indeed built after the Theatre it is likely that its choice of location at least was heavily influenced by the latter's position. But by the same token, if they were built in the reverse order, as is certainly possible, it seems equally likely that the Theatre was influenced by the *Curtain's* location. Reading the Curtain as imitative of the Theatre ignores not only its status as a separate entity but also the Curtain's existence and development over time, long after the Theatre had gone.

This scepticism about the derivative nature of the playhouse has been vindicated by the findings of the excavation of the site by the Museum of London Archaeology, which announced in a press release in 2016 that, contrary to previous belief the Curtain 'appears to be a rectangular building, measuring approximately 22m x 30m'.²⁴⁸ This would suggest the playhouse was large, with a vast potential capacity. In comparison, the Theatre probably had a diameter of 23m, and the Rose a similar size at 22.23m.²⁴⁹ The size of the Globe is far more uncertain and has been fiercely debated, but although it was probably larger than the Theatre and Rose, estimates do not suggest it was as large as the Curtain has now been shown to be.²⁵⁰

The excavation also revealed brick walls, which survive up to 1.5 meters high in some areas, and a decorative knucklebone floor in the edge of the galleries. There are also other significant discoveries, such as a series of tunnels beneath the stage, which MOLA suggest may have been for actors to leave one from one exit and reappear at a different one. Presumably, if this is the case, there was not a connected backstage area behind a frons scenae as at the modern Globe. It is perhaps also worth considering whether this tunnel could have served a purpose related to special effects, similarly to 'heaven' and 'hell' trapdoors in some other playhouses.

These findings make Johannes de Witt's 1596 reference to the Curtain as an 'amphitheatre' puzzling.²⁵¹ It may be the case that as de Witt was Dutch there was a problem in comprehension or translation, but it also raises the extremely interesting possibility that the early modern usage of 'amphitheatre' was an umbrella term which could include all open-air

²⁴⁸ MOLA team, 'Initial findings from excavation at Shakespeare's Curtain Theatre revealed', *Museum of London Archaeology blog*, (17 May 2016) <<http://www.mola.org.uk/blog/initial-findings-excavation-shakespeare%E2%80%99s-curtain-theatre-revealed>> [accessed 3 June 2017].

²⁴⁹ Julian M.C. Bowsher, 'Twenty years on: The archaeology of Shakespeare's London playhouses', in *Shakespeare*, 7.4 (2011), p.458; Andrew Gurr, 'The playhouses: Archaeology and after', in *Shakespeare*, 7.4 (2011), p.401.

²⁵⁰ Gurr, 'The playhouses: Archaeology and after', p.401.

²⁵¹ University of Utrecht Library, MS Var. 355, fos. 131v-32, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.410.

buildings, or at least those which housed entertainments and spectacles. If this is the case, it certainly argues against homogenising outdoor playhouses and supports my critique of the over-extension of evidence from one theatre to apply to all others. Given de Witt's description, it might even be prudent to remain cautious about whether playhouses referred to as 'amphitheatres' can definitely be known to be round or polygonal unless there is external corroborating evidence. The implications of the findings from the excavation have yet to be fully processed in scholarly narratives but they certainly complicate many understandings and tenets to date. Indeed, Holger Syme emphasises just how significant this difference could be in his blog post 'Post-Curtain Theatre History', suggesting that the discovery of the Curtain's rectangular shape is a 'game changing moment', because it shifts the conceptualisation of what was 'normative' for an outdoor playhouse. Syme notes that the Fortune has been regarded as an oddity for being square, but 'now that the Curtain, one of the oldest and longest-surviving of early modern theatres, also turns out to have been rectangular, the narrative has shifted in a way that may make all the other similarly-designed playhouses appear just as normative as the round ones'.²⁵²

Clearly, plenty more information will come to light about the Curtain when MOMA publish their full excavation findings. Nevertheless, there is already plenty that can be inferred from what has been revealed so far. I would argue that, in respect of design similarities at least, it is now clear that the idea that the Curtain mimicked the Theatre is inaccurate. Not only was the Curtain rectangular rather than polygonal, but it did not conform to the other, rectangular outdoor playhouse 'type' either. Rather than being a converted inn, the excavation's findings suggest that 'the structure, in places, reused the walls of earlier buildings, with the back section of the playhouse being a new addition'.²⁵³ As far as is known at least, this was an unprecedented form for a playhouse, which supports the idea of the Curtain as an innovative space.

There is no doubt that the structure was brick rather than timber, lath and plaster: the remains of the Curtain are well preserved, with walls up to 1.5 meters high still standing.²⁵⁴ As brick was an expensive material, this may be informative about how much money was invested in the building's construction and how impressive or grand it would have appeared to early modern individuals. However, this is qualified by the fact that some of the structure was pre-existing: perhaps the new building materials used in the Curtain's construction were not expensive or copious, but rather these expensive materials were reincorporated from existing structures. The stage appears to have been 14 meters long and 5 meters wide: very long and

²⁵² 'Post-Curtain Theatre History', *dispositio: mostly theatre, then and now, there and here*, (18 May 2016) <<http://www.dispositio.net/archives/2262>> [accessed 3 June 2017]

²⁵³ MOLA, 'Initial findings from excavation'.

²⁵⁴ MOLA, 'Initial findings from excavation'.

thin in comparison to the archetypal English ‘thrust’ stage, and interestingly recalls – or pre-empt – the long, thin stages of the later public tennis court theatres. In terms of staging, this stage may have produced a similar effect to the ‘picture-frame’ style of playing which is considered to have developed during the Restoration as audiences grew and ‘actors retreated behind the proscenium arch’.²⁵⁵

The only known image of the period which may be of the Curtain is from ‘The View of the Cittie of London from the North towards the Sowth’, as pictured below. However, even this is not certain: scholarly opinion has varied between attributing it to the Theatre, then probably the Curtain.²⁵⁶ The cover image of Linnell’s book on the Curtain is a fanciful extrapolation from this image, with the Curtain appearing as a very tall ‘fortress’ style building with viewing platforms on top that almost resemble battlements. However, as the image appears to show a six or eight-sided polygon, it now seems likely that the attribution will revert to the Theatre, since the discovery of the Curtain’s shape does not appear to reflect the building in the image. However, no substantial debate exists since these findings, although it should be noted that the accuracy of the drawing may not be exact, meaning that there is still a chance that it is a Curtain depiction. Holger Syme notes in his blog that although the building in the panorama ‘has been described as polygonal or “octagonal,” it may in fact be a poorly rendered rectangle — or a rectangle with a stair turret jutting out from it’, although he admits that he is unsure whether the archaeological evidence would support this possibility.²⁵⁷ This is supported by Bowsher’s suggestion that the protrusions shown in the image are stair turrets, which were probably secondary features ‘added at any time in the long life of the Curtain’, perhaps as part of a ‘clearly a new architectural development [...] probably related to new systems of paying for entry’, which was also demonstrated by the Globe, Hope and Swan.²⁵⁸

Whichever playhouse *The View of the Cittie* represents, it is worth noting in terms of the homogenisation of outdoor playhouse style that the number of sides are considerably fewer than the Globe’s twenty and the Rose’s fourteen, and that this early venue is very far from the wide open, flat, circular buildings such as those on Hollar’s panorama or the bull and bear baiting amphitheatres on the Agas Map. Rather, the walls are so high that it is not obvious that the building is open air, and the partial roof that would have protected the tiring house and perhaps the stage is large and elevated higher than the rest of the roofing which covers the galleries. This design seems to bear a less striking resemblance to either classical theatres or

²⁵⁵ Paul Kuritz, *The Making of Theatre History* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988), p.233.

²⁵⁶ Julian Bowsher, p.461; Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.332.

²⁵⁷ Syme, ‘Post-Curtain’, *dispositio*, <<http://www.dispositio.net/archives/2262>> [accessed 3 June 2017].

²⁵⁸ ‘Twenty years on’, p.461.

animal baiting arenas which have often been thought to be the ancestors of English playhouses.

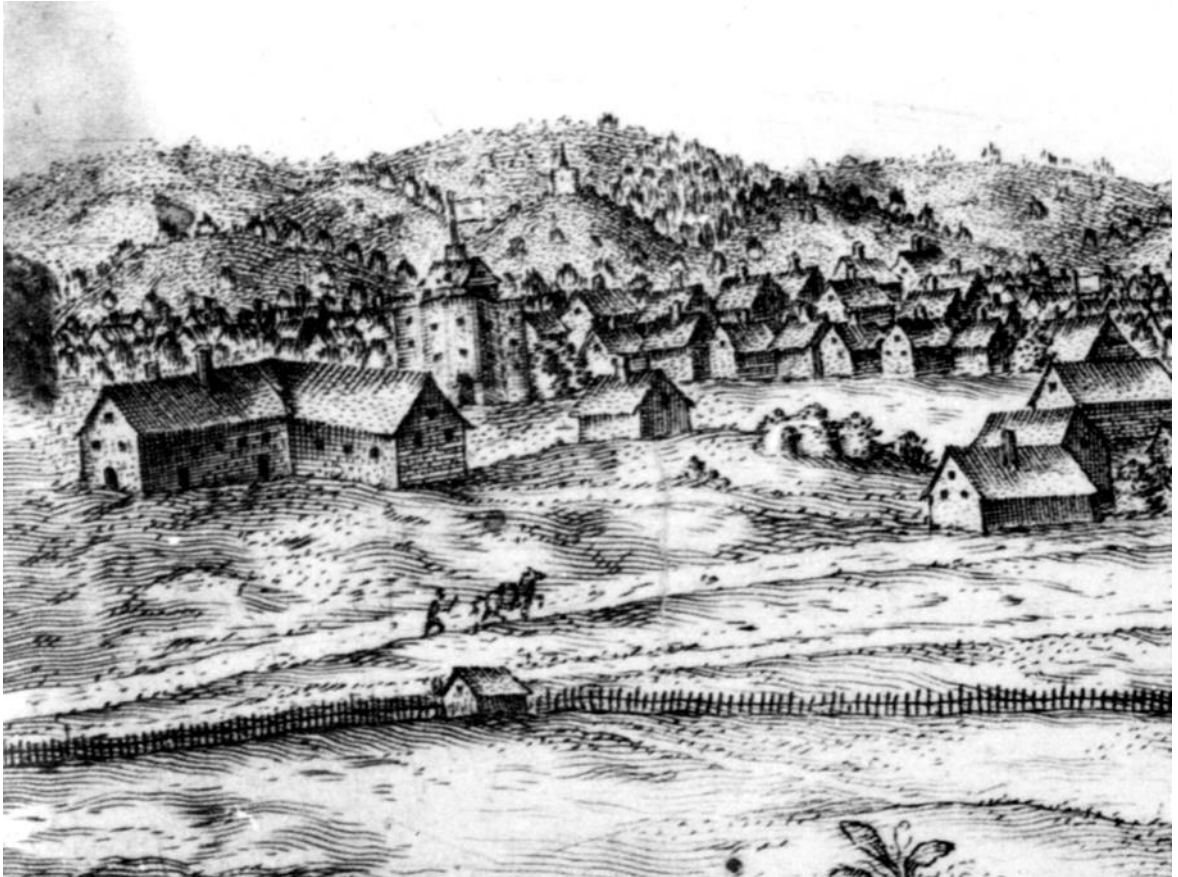


Figure 6. From 'The View of the Cittie of London from the North towards the Sowth', 1599. The structure to the left of centre with a flag is thought to be either the Theatre or the Curtain.

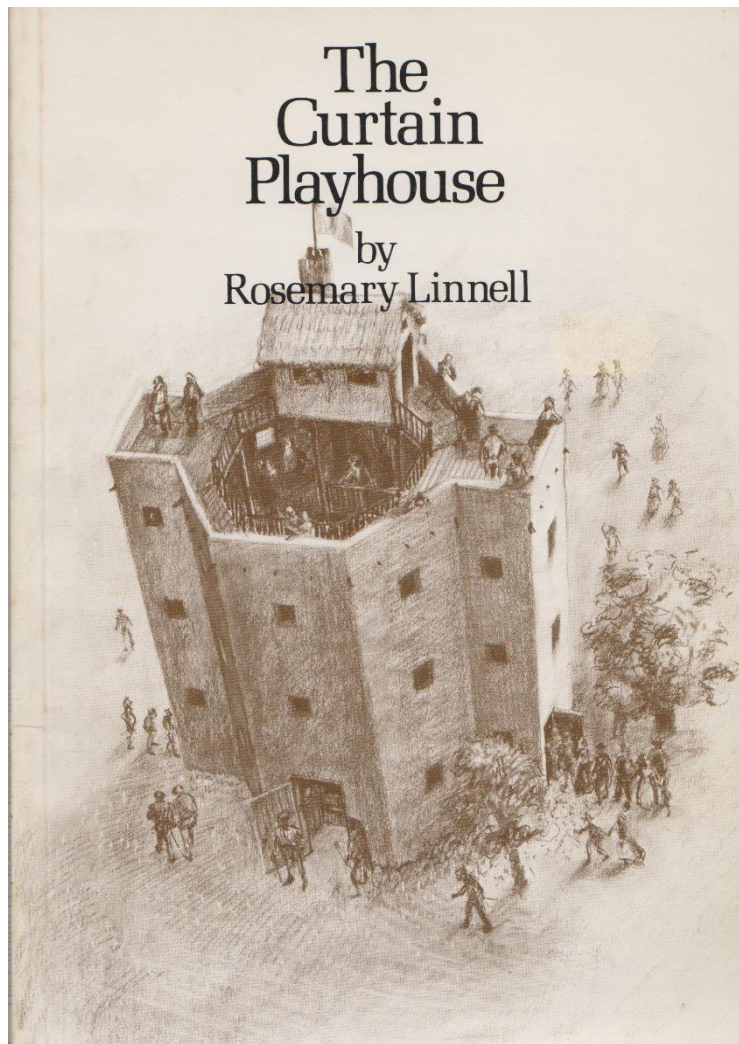


Figure 7. Impression of the Curtain Theatre on front cover of Rosemary Linnell's 'The Curtain Playhouse'

Although critical opinion of the Curtain has long been both negative and absent, this seems likely to change. Developments in theatre history promote a focus on playhouse, repertory and companies, and the discovery and excavation of the Curtain site means that new evidence has become available, and that more will follow. Nevertheless, the ways in which the Curtain is discussed in these contexts can re-iterate some of the problematic elements relating to how research topics attract attention. One of the reasons the Curtain has lacked critical attention has been its relative lack of connection to Shakespeare: the prominence of the Globe, Blackfriars and to a lesser extent the Theatre for almost anyone who thinks about early modern theatre is overwhelmingly due to those playhouses' strong connections to Shakespeare. This is demonstrated by the comparative lack of interest in the Rose despite it being the subject of Henslowe's diary – by far the most comprehensive extant record of early modern playhouse operations – and the site of the theatre's remains being open for the public to view.

Despite being understudied because of a perceived underconnection to Shakespeare, now that new evidence and increased visibility prompts interest in the Curtain it is this connection which is highlighted. Consistently foregrounding the link to Shakespeare to the detriment of other information does not provide a representative insight into its almost fifty years as an active playhouse, especially as it was not their tenure but ‘the years 1604-1607 [which] represent the zenith of its fortunes’.²⁵⁹ While this is the unanimous approach of journalistic reporting of the excavation, this is probably inevitable given the necessity of provoking public interest and the limited awareness of other aspects of the early modern theatre industry.²⁶⁰ But scholarship and publications with an academic focus also tend towards a disproportionate focus on this aspect. For example, *Current Archaeology*’s edition reporting on the excavation divides its front cover image half into a photograph of the dig, and half for the Chandos portrait of Shakespeare. While the title of the feature is ‘Raising the Curtain’ Shakespeare’s connection – or *ownership* – of the space is highlighted by the subtitle ‘[e]xcavating Shakespeare’s lost playhouse’.²⁶¹

This may be an entirely necessary tactic for framing the discovery of the Curtain in order to stimulate interest in it. Indeed, Bowsher notes that Shakespeare’s name becoming ‘synonymous with an historic period and type of building is as much a curse of modern academia as it is a necessary (marketing) label’.²⁶² Shakespeare is an effective hook for any work on early modern theatre, and books which link themselves to Shakespeare are more commercially viable. This provides an eminently understandable rationale for emphasising links to Shakespeare, and perhaps means the continuation of this trend is inevitable, but it remains important to note the bias that this produces in the body of information amassed about early modern theatre, so that this can be taken into account when constructing a balanced picture of the early modern theatre industry.

²⁵⁹ *Early English Stages*, II, p.67.

²⁶⁰ See for example, Maev Kennedy, ‘Did Shakespeare write Henry V to suit London theatre’s odd shape?’, *Guardian*, 10 November 2016, <<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2016/nov/10/shakespeare-write-henry-v-suit-london-theatre-the-curtain-odd-shape>> [accessed 11 January 2017]; Isabelle Fraser, ‘New £750m Shoreditch development centred around remains of Shakespearean theatre’, *Daily Telegraph*, 8 Feb 2016 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/constructionandproperty/12146089/New-750m-Shoreditch-development-centred-around-remains-of-Shakespearean-theatre.html>> [accessed 15 January 2017]; Nick Enoch, ‘Is this a digger I see before me? ‘Wooden O’ stage of ‘lost’ Curtain theatre where Shakespeare premiered Henry V unearthed near Thames’, *Daily Mail*, 6 June 2012, <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2155214/Shakespeare-Wooden-O-stage-Curtain-theatre-Shakespeare-premiered-Henry-V-unearthed-near-Thames.html>> [accessed 15 January 2017].

²⁶¹ Carly Hilts, ‘Raising the Curtain: Excavating Shakespeare’s lost playhouse’, *Current Archaeology*, 269 (2012).

²⁶² ‘Twenty years on’, p.463.

3. Clowning, jiggling and Thomas Greene at the Curtain

It is not just the difficulties of impartiality in modern criticism that has negatively affected the Curtain's reputation: Griffith notes that 'right back from within the seventeenth century itself to within our own era [critics have generally preferred] to draw extreme distinctions between theatres, auditors and sets of plays', and indeed some bias against the Curtain may have originated in the early modern period itself.²⁶³ A deal was struck in 1600 between Edward Alleyn and the Privy Council: he was allowed to open his new Fortune playhouse provided that the Curtain ceased to operate, thus limiting the number of playhouses to just two.²⁶⁴ As Alleyn did not hold any stake in the Curtain this would have had no negative effect for him, suggesting that the Privy Council, aside from perhaps wanting to limit the number of performance venues generally, saw an opportunity to get rid of the Curtain. In any case, they must have considered a new playhouse run by Alleyn to have been a preferable option to the Curtain's continuation. John Aubrey describes the Curtain as 'a kind of nursery or obscure playhouse', although it is perhaps relevant that this was also a retrospective account: if his notes were not compiled until at least the 1660s a playhouse which has ceased operating c.1625 would undoubtedly seem more obscure than some of its contemporaries which had still been active that decade.²⁶⁵ Stern dubs the apparent phenomenon of those involved in the early modern theatre industry disparaging or avoiding the playhouse "The Curtain effect" and notes that through its unusually long performance history 'only one play (and no company) acknowledges Curtain performance on its title-page – and then it draws attention to the fact that it was also performed elsewhere: W. Smith's *The Hector of Germany ... As it hath beene publickly acted at the Red Bull, and at the Curtayne, by a company of young-men of this citie* (1615)'.²⁶⁶ Although it overstates the case to say that this draws attention to the fact it was performed elsewhere – it was common to list two performance venues and being the first listed is not a sure indicator of preference – there certainly was a link between publicity and the listing (or not) of venues and companies on title pages.

While an absence of listings on title-pages may suggest that there was something about the Curtain which was unappealing, it is nevertheless necessary to consider the various ways of consuming drama and the ways that demographic and taste varied not only between playhouses, but between performance and print consumption. The playhouses which were appealing to list on the title-pages of print editions may not have included the Curtain, but that only excludes it from one area of the dramatic landscape. It was patently popular enough as a

²⁶³ *A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse*, p.16.

²⁶⁴ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, pp.413-414.

²⁶⁵ 'Brief Lives', chiefly of *Contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey, between the Years 1669 & 1696*, ed. by Andrew Clark, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898) II, p.12.

²⁶⁶ 'The Curtain is Yours', p.71, p.79.

performance venue to be commercially viable for half a century, but if its particular attractions were less likely to appeal to *readers* of drama, then it also follows that far less evidence of the venue will have remained. Indeed, I would suggest that the importance of clowning and jiggging at the Curtain have a large part to play in this. Stern highlights that ‘the playhouse had a particularly good reputation for its clowns: all the more surprising given that it did not have an association with a particular performing company’ and that there are ‘Curtain sightings of Richard Tarlton, Will Rowley, Thomas Green, Thomas Pope, Will Kemp and Robert Armin’.²⁶⁷ As Mark Bayer has noted, the Queen’s Men, who were resident at the Curtain from 1603 to 1607, demonstrated a ‘renunciation of traditional dramatic form [...] signaled by the fact that their leading actor, from Will Kemp to Thomas Greene to William Rowley, was always a clown’.²⁶⁸ It is worth noting that in contrast to the title pages of playbooks Robert Armin was happy to publicise his connection with the Curtain in print, or even to capitalise on his reputation from it: the first edition of his jest book *Foole vpon foole* names him as ‘Clonnico de Curtanio Snuff’; that is, the Clown at the Curtain, Snuff.²⁶⁹

But clowning and jiggging are generally transient, visual elements of theatre that depend primarily on the delivery, performance and often star actor or clown rather than the writing. As such, it is partly a problem of form: the appealing elements of the Curtain were ones which are rarely preserved for posterity. William N. West notes that ‘[j]iggging and even particular jigs are frequently mentioned in plays and other documents of the period, well into the seventeenth century, but relatively few texts of jigs survive’ and even then ‘[l]ike ballads or similar texts, the jigs that are extant say relatively little about how they were performed’.²⁷⁰ This does not mean that proponents of these more fleeting forms were any less important to early modern theatre as it was experienced by the audiences of the day: ‘Richard Tarlton and William Kempe were remembered literally for generations as the acknowledged masters of the jig’ and Tarlton in particular was ‘a legend in his own lifetime and was consistently reinvented for two decades after his death’.²⁷¹ The appeal of Tarlton and Kempe’s style of performance relied heavily on their personal abilities: Kempe’s physical endurance and strength was demonstrated by his nine day morris dance from London to Norwich, and Tarlton was recording as hopping like a flea as part of his comic entertainment, as well as being a Master of Fence.²⁷² Tarlton was also famous for his ‘Theames’, which were essentially improvised

²⁶⁷ ‘The Curtain is Yours’, p.93.

²⁶⁸ Mark Bayer, ‘Queen Anne’s Men and the commercial life of London’s neighborhood economies’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Ohio State University, 2002), p.79.

²⁶⁹ *Foole vpon foole, or Six sortes of sotties* (London: E. Alde for William Ferbrand, 1600), sig. A1^r.

²⁷⁰ ‘When is the Jig Up – and What is it Up To?’, in *Locating the Queen’s Men, 1583-1603: Material Practices and Conditions of Playing*, ed. by Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p.201.

²⁷¹ West, ‘When is the Jig Up’, p.203; Peter Thomson, ‘Tarlton, Richard (d. 1588)’, in *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, (2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/26971>

²⁷² West, ‘When is the Jig Up’, p.209.

comedy: the audience gave a topic which Tarlton would improvise jokes about. Whatever the era, this form of performance is transient, and moreover its appeal lies primarily in its performative rather than its literary aspects. Indeed, this may partly account for low modern evaluations of the worth of the Curtain's performances: texts which are considered to have literary merit still tend to be valued over other forms.

Yet the Curtain's link to clowning may be even stronger than we realise: by 1611 the Curtain was in the very unusual position of being owned entirely by Thomas Greene. Greene was not a businessman or theatrical impresario but an actor and clown with the Queen's Men, who had himself performed on the Curtain stage. He was probably able to buy the playhouse due to a financially advantageous marriage in around 1604.²⁷³ His ownership and ties to the Curtain may provide some additional explanation for Stern's observation that as a playhouse it had a strong association with clowning, despite housing a series of companies rather than a fixed one, especially given that he was 'certainly a "star"' due to his 'abilities as a comedian' and 'personal aptitude for improvisation and humor'.²⁷⁴ The playhouse has been referred to as 'the Green Curtaine'.²⁷⁵ Rather than this being a reference to the colour of the Curtain on the sign hanging outside the playhouse, or deriving from the surrounding vegetation in the fields, it seems highly possible that it derived from a strong association with this particular owner: it would not take a great deal of linguistic slippage for 'Greene's Curtain' to become 'the Green Curtain'. Indeed, it would not be the only time that Greene had put such a memorable stamp on something that its name was changed to incorporate his: in 1611 he played the clown Bubble in John Cooke's *The City Gallant*, and was so popular in his performance, especially of the character's catchphrase 'Tu quoque' that the play was renamed in print, and has largely been known since then, as *Greene's Tu Quoque*.²⁷⁶ It may also be relevant that he died soon after in August 1612, and as such it could have been a form of eulogy to call his both his playhouse and most famous play after him.²⁷⁷

²⁷³ Rebecca Louise Warner, 'Green, Thomas (*bap.* 1658, *d.* 1738)', in *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, (2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/11420>

²⁷⁴ Bayer, 'Queen Anne's Men', p.79.

²⁷⁵ Aubrey, '*Brief Lives*', II, p.12.

²⁷⁶ Jo. Cooke, *Greenes Tu quoque, or, The Cittie Gallant* (London: Nicholas Okes for Iohn Trundle, 1614), sig. A1^r.

²⁷⁷ Warner, 'Green, Thomas (*bap.* 1658, *d.* 1738)'.



Figure 8. The title page of 'The City Gallant', renamed after Thomas Greene.

Even taking the afterlife of different dramatic forms into consideration, the fact that there is only one surviving play which lists the Curtain on its title page does not mean there were not more published at the time; it is actually difficult to conclude with certainty how prevalent the Curtain was on title pages at the time compared to other playhouses. David McInnis and Matthew Steggle estimate that 3000 plays were written and staged between 1567 and 1642 – of those that were subsequently printed, about 800 have survived in print, and 543 as full texts.²⁷⁸ Even without know exactly how many plays underwent a commercial print-run, this may be enough to conclude that the Curtain was probably infrequently recorded overall, but there is

²⁷⁸ *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p.1, p.18.

still enough leeway to leave the possibility that the remaining sample of printed plays is misleading and the full picture was significantly different.

When considering the reasons for plays being extant or not, it is important to be aware of the significant element of chance: McInnis and Steggle urge scepticism when analysing lost plays, and highlight that ‘it would not be prudent to insist on a hierarchy of values that cannot be substantiated: it may not be the case that the “best” survived and the “worst” perished’.²⁷⁹ Nevertheless, there may be factors that affect the probability of survival within this. As I have already argued, some kinds of plays were probably considered to be more viable as printed texts because of their literary appeal. While Lukas Erne convincingly argues that to include playbooks in institutional and independent libraries was the norm, and their exclusion the exception, this does not discount that not all plays were published as playbooks in the first place.²⁸⁰ It is clear that plays would have been selected for publication based on what would appeal to literate audiences, which would certainly be more complicated than choosing a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ play, or one of ‘high’ or ‘low’ tastes; nevertheless it does suggest the possibility that plays performed for and enjoyed by largely illiterate audiences – as the Curtain’s may have been – were less likely to be published as playbooks. Additionally, while extraordinary popularity probably results in a higher chance of survival, with more copies and editions circulating, there is also the possibility that the very popularity of a text could mean it was less likely to survive: McInnis and Steggle use the example of *Titus Andronicus* Q1, which was so popular it ‘appears to have been read to pieces rather than callously discarded’.²⁸¹ As such, it is hard to discern for certain whether the Curtain is absent on title-pages because the venue was seen as a liability to sales, because the Curtain’s plays were popular as performances but not with readers of drama, or even because they were less likely to survive once printed due to enthusiastic overuse.

²⁷⁹ *Lost Plays*, p.3.

²⁸⁰ *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.11-12.

²⁸¹ *Lost Plays*, p.3.

4. Nationalism and xenophobia in the Curtain repertory

Despite difficulties in discerning a great deal of the Curtain's repertory, it is possible to expand it slightly. *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England* demonstrates that information can be gleaned from plays which we have record of even though they are no longer extant. It argues lostness should be read as 'a continuum, not an absolute state, and that valuable things can be said about plays which do not survive in a main playscript.'²⁸² In addition to the 543 play texts that survive from the period, it highlights 744 named plays that exist in record but are not in playscript. Thus, more information about the Curtain's repertory can be gleaned by looking at the titles of the lost plays which were performed there. Henry Herbert's record book as Master of the Revels contains drama submitted to the state for licensed performance from 1623 onwards. It contains entries for two plays, now lost, which were performed at the Curtain:

10th June [1622] for allow: of a new P. conteyn: 13 sheetes 2 <pages ½ called the> *Duche painter & the French brank* acted by the <Princes playes at> the Curtayne)— 20^s.

August [1623] A Tragedy of the Plantation of Virginia, the <prophaness left out> contayninge 16 sheets and one <leaf> may be acted <els not for the> companie at the Curtune²⁸³

These can be added to what is already known of the Curtain's repertory: while the Chamberlain's Men occupied it between 1597/8-1599 they played *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry V* and *Every Man in His Humour*. Gurr and Ichikawa believe that the first performances of *1 Henry IV*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Much Ado About Nothing* premiered at the Curtain, although rather than demonstrating the Curtain's significance, it is read as a failure that it is not more famous despite housing such famous plays.²⁸⁴ It is also feasible that they, and the other companies who played there, performed some or all of the popular older members of their repertory; extremely popular plays seemed to remain perennially on stage. This is especially likely if the repertory cycle was as mobile as Knutson suggests: 'companies opened a new season with continuations from the previous season and introduced the first new show within a week or two; in the weeks thereafter, they brought new plays and revivals into production at about the rate of one every two weeks'.²⁸⁵ Nevertheless, on balance the level of supposition involved in ascertaining which old repertory members would have been revived means that these cannot be included or used to draw trends from. There is one revival play which can be cautiously included: a letter from a Florentine visitor in 1613 reports a visit to the Curtain

²⁸² McInnis and Steggle, p.11.

²⁸³ ORD HP5, 85, Folger, cited in N. W. Bawcutt, *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: the Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, 1623-73* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), p.137.

²⁸⁴ *Staging in Shakespeare's Theatres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.26-27.

²⁸⁵ *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company 1594-1613* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1991), p.32.

which concluded with the audience requesting the company played ‘friars’ the next day.²⁸⁶ It seems very likely that this refers to *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, and that it was part of the repertory of whichever company was resident in 1613.

The revival of old plays was probably also a feature of Queen Anne’s Men’s repertory, who although they started their performance career at the Curtain when they formed in 1603, would have undoubtedly had revivals from the companies their members had previously occupied in repertory. On balance I think it is too speculative to suggest what they would have been. They did, however, premiere *The Travels of Three English Brothers* at the Curtain in 1607, shortly before they moved to the Red Bull.²⁸⁷ The Prince’s Company were in residence there from 1620-1623, with the first performance of *The Birth of Merlin* at the venue in 1622.²⁸⁸ Given that they premiered *The Witch of Edmonton* at the Cockpit in 1621, it seems likely this was also performed at the Curtain. Gurr suggests that they may also have performed *Wit at Several Weapons* at the Curtain, although this is not certain.²⁸⁹ Finally of course, there is *The Hector of Germany*, listing the venue on its title page and printed in 1615, and performed by a ‘Company of Young-men of this Citie’.²⁹⁰

This is obviously a partial repertory, and a small percentage of what would have been staged throughout decades of performance. It is important to bear in mind that lost data can produce apparent trends which are in fact skewed. However, from the information that is available, it seems that the Curtain repertory may have had an increased interest in national identity, foreignness and possibly nationalist and xenophobic sentiment than other playhouses.

Representations of foreignness on the Curtain stage

The Duche Painter, and the French Branke clearly foregrounds an interest in national identity in its title, and leads me to suspect that it may have been a comedy relying on national stereotypes as a source of humour. Even if this is not the case, the nationality of the characters is clearly an important part of the play, or just as importantly, is being sold to the audience as such. *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* valorises Englishness by juxtaposing it against Turkish, and to an extent, Persian culture and subtly promotes cultural and religious imperialism which may have also been present in *A Tragedy of the Plantation of Virginia*. In any case, the latter must have exhibited an interest in the ‘New World’, and grappled with the idea of a new Christian, English-speaking society and the problems it could entail. Indeed, Anthony Parr suggests it

²⁸⁶ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.415.

²⁸⁷ Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, II, p.404.

²⁸⁸ Bawcutt, *Control and Censorship*, p.136.

²⁸⁹ *Shakespearean Stage*, p.298.

²⁹⁰ Smith, W., *The Hector of Germany* (London: By Thomas Creede, for Iosias Harrison, 1615), sig. A1^r.

was likely to have been a response to a massacre of colonialists by Native Americans a year previously in 1622.²⁹¹

Every Man in his Humour, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Much Ado* have no especial connection to the trend, but *Henry V* is perhaps most remembered for its rousing nationalist sentiment, and contains numerous scenes which suggest humour derived from French accents and language miscommunications – such as the innuendo derived from the pun on ‘baiser’ in the courtship scene, which means both to ‘to kiss’ and ‘to fuck’.²⁹² Fluellen, whilst a character with many positive qualities, draws on stereotypes about the Welsh and is written to be performed with an exaggerated Welsh accent, which is seen again in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in the character Hugh Evans. Indeed, 4.1 is a comic scene entirely extraneous to the plot which derives humour entirely from Mistress Quickly’s misunderstandings of Latin words and Hugh Evans’s mispronunciations of them.²⁹³ Further than that, Falstaff implies that his final humiliation at the end of the play is almost outstripped by Evan’s ridicule. He is mortified by having ‘liued to stand at the taunt of one that makes Fritters of English’ (60), and dwells on national stereotypes similar to Henry V’s leek when he says ‘[t]is time I were choak’d with a peece of toasted Cheese’ (60). Again, when he still believes Evans and the children to be fairies taunting him he exclaims ‘defend me from that Welsh Fairy,/ Least he transforme me to a peece of Cheese!’ (59). Despite Falstaff obviously making a connection to cheese elsewhere, from a psychologically realistic point of view, this is unlikely intended to be a genuine fear and so the reasonable explanation is that the line is to amuse the audience by playing on a stereotype. This is even more the case when Mistress Ford asks ‘[w]here is [...] the Welch-deuill Herne?’ (58), as this seems less appropriate to her character than to Falstaff’s. Even the truncated Q1 version includes this aspect, with Falstaff referring to Sir Hugh as a ‘wealch goate’ (sig. G3^v) and ‘wealch Fairie’ (sig. G3^v).²⁹⁴ *Merry Wives* also features a more stereotypical and obvious mockery of the French than *Henry V* through the ridiculous and undesired suitor Doctor Caius.

More than simply mocking the Welsh accent, *The Birth of Merlin* features a treacherous Welsh King who slew the English King’s brother in order to gain power, and an invading onslaught by the pagan Saxons – who are also the villains in *The Hector of Germany*. In *The Birth of Merlin* the language links immigration to invasion and infection: ‘these serpents have betraid your Life and Kingdom: does not every day bring tidings of more swarms of lowsie slaves, the offal fugitives of barren Germany, that land upon our Coasts, and by our neglect settled in Norfolk

²⁹¹ *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p.5.

²⁹² Shakespeare, *The Cronicle History of Henry the fift* (London: Thomas Creede, for Tho. Millington, and Iohn Busby, 1600), sig. G3^r-G3^v.

²⁹³ Shakespeare, *Mr. VVilliam Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (London: Isaac Iaggard, 1623), p.53.

²⁹⁴ Shakespeare, *A Most pleasaunt and excellent conceited Comedie, of Syr Iohn Falstaffe, and the merrie Wines of Windsor* (London: Thomas Creede for Arthur Iohnson, 1602).

and Northumberland?'.²⁹⁵ *Hector of Germany* also alludes to a threat of invasion by Spain which is seemingly extraneous to the plot, but may be designed to capitalise on anti-Spanish sentiment (sig. D3^v).

Nationalism and comedic stereotypes of foreigners are also hinted at in the plot summary provided by the Swiss tourist Thomas Platter of an unknown comedy that he saw at the Curtain in 1599.²⁹⁶ He notes that

they presented diverse nations and an Englishman struggling together for a maiden; he overcame them all except the German who won the girl in a tussle, and then sat down by her side, when he and his servant drank themselves tipsy, so that they were both fuddled and the servant proceeded to hurl his shoe at this master's head, whereupon they both fell asleep; meanwhile the Englishman stole into the tent and absconded with the German's prize, thus in turn outwitting the German; in conclusion they danced very charmingly in English and Irish fashion.²⁹⁷

It is relevant to previous points about the Curtain's dramatic strengths that Platter noted the jig in a positive light, and that the seemingly inconsequential moment of a servant throwing a shoe at his master was so memorable: this slapstick humour would be a popular part of a clown act, and as Kempe was famous for throwing his shoe at other characters, it seems likely it was him performing with the Chamberlain's Men.²⁹⁸ Still, the premise of an Englishman fighting members of various nations for his daughter sets up the potential for a scenario playing on classic xenophobic and patriarchal ideas, and it was probably these themes that were intended to provide the overall sense of gratification for the audience. Indeed, if, as seems likely, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* was popularly demanded by the audience at the Curtain, there is a striking comparison to be made between this description and the English Friar Bacon's defeat of the German wizard Vandermast.²⁹⁹

However, it should perhaps be noted that although Platter does not provide clear opinions on what he has seen there is no sense that as a foreigner he feels insulted or threatened by the environment, and there is a general sense of enjoyment, although it is worth noting that the Swiss were not one of the nations represented. Nevertheless, the possibility of English self-

²⁹⁵ W. Rowley, *The birth of Merlin, or, The childe hath found his father as it hath been several times acted with great applause* (London: Tho. Johnson for Francis Kirkman and Henry Marsh, 1662), p.37.

²⁹⁶ Egan has suggested that this performance could have been at either the Curtain or the Boar's Head, as the latter was still operating in 1598 and also in Bishopsgate, where Platter locates the playhouse. Chambers and Wickham both ascribe the performance to the Curtain, but it seems worth noting that even in this instance of relative certainty of a Curtain reference there is still some doubt. See 'Thomas Platter's account of an unknown play at the Curtain or the Boar's Head', *Notes and Queries*, 47 (2000), 53-56.

²⁹⁷ *Travels in England, 1599*, trans. by Clare Williams (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), p.166.

²⁹⁸ One year after Platter's visit, Carlo in *Every Man Out* – also performed by the Chamberlain's Men – says 'would I had one of Kempes shooes to throw after you'. See Ben Jonson, *The comicall Satyre of Every Man Out of his Humor* (London: Nicholas Linde, 1600), sig. N2^v.

²⁹⁹ Robert Greene, *The honorable historie of frier Bacon, and frier Bongay*, (London: Adam Islip for Edward White, 1594), sig. F1^r-F1^v.

deprecation is also a distinct possibility: robbing the German of the daughter he has ‘won’ might have elicited audience approval rooted in xenophobic hostility, but it also accepts victory through dishonesty as an English trait. In addition, winning via a drinking competition plays on a stereotype of an English propensity for alcohol consumption that is hardly unproblematically positive. Ruling out the idea that even a generally nationalist agenda could also allow for negative or humorous self-reflection would be a mistake, and risks playing into the same stereotypes of ignorant and hostile audiences at the so-called ‘citizen’ playhouses. Indeed, *The Birth of Merlin* clearly derives humour from self-deprecation and negative stereotypes about the British as overweight and lecherous. The clown, played by William Rowley, who was famous for his ‘fat clown’ roles, and the clown’s sister, who is heavily pregnant but unmarried and unsure who the father is, are asked their nationality. ‘A couple of Great Britains’, replies the Clown ‘you may see by our bellies sir’ (27).

The Travels of the Three English Brothers, which was performed by the Queen’s Men at the Curtain before they moved to the Red Bull also deals with ideas of foreignness in a more complex way rather than solely negative stereotypes.³⁰⁰ As Parr notes in his introduction to *Three English Travel Plays*, it ‘undertakes to portray diplomatic activity and cultural contact between England and both Catholic and non-European powers in a way that was impossible as long as the foreign was simply demonised or caricatured on the stage.’³⁰¹

It is striking that in the Pope’s brief appearance he is represented as dignified and just. Sir Anthony refers to him as ‘the father of our Mother Church’ and ‘the mouth of heaven’, which Parr glosses as ‘strikingly unironic, given the Protestant context’.³⁰² Anthony and the Pope seem to join together as Christians against the common enemy: Anthony describes himself as ‘Sherley, a Christian and a gentleman,/ A pilgrim soldier and an Englishman.’ To which the Pope responds ‘For all these styles we love and honour thee’ and promises to send him ‘back/ With power so strong whose sight makes Turkey shake’ (84-85). Moreover, the Persian Sophy is shown as an admirer of Robert and Anthony Shirley, and primarily an ally to them. At the start of the play the Governor of Qasvin has told the Sophy of the ‘worths I have observed in you’ (61), notably the brothers’ ‘state’, ‘habit’ and – with problematic racial undertones – ‘fair demeanour’ (61). On the Sophy’s first entrance he greets them cordially:

Christian or howsoever, courteous thou seemst;
We bid thee welcome in unused phrase.
No gentle stranger greets our continent
But our arms fold him in a soft embrace (62)

³⁰⁰ John Day, *The trauailes of the three English Brothers* (London: George Eld for Iohn Wright, 1607)

³⁰¹ Parr, ed., *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p.6.

³⁰² All quotations from *Travels* from Parr, ed., *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p.38; p.46; p.88.

Tolerance of Christianity and religious difference is thus the first aspect of the Persian ruler highlighted, followed by friendly hospitality. Further, the Sophy's Niece is represented throughout as an archetypal virtuous and loyal noblewoman, speaking against her uncle when she thinks he has unjustly executed Robert despite believing it will mean her execution. Indeed, her inter-cultural marriage to Robert forms part of the happy resolution of the play.

However, an important distinction made by the play is between Turks and Persians; the occasionally fragile alliance with the Persians being based partly on their admiration for the noble qualities of the Shirleys, but also largely through their common enemy the Turks. Javad Ghatta argues that with the publication of *Travels*, the distinct Persian Islamic identity which dated back to the writing of *Tamburlaine*, 'entered the public sphere and occupied the popular imagination of Londoners with unprecedented intensity'.³⁰³ Indeed, Persia was 'for Western writers a genuinely exotic country, not a malign and unknowable neighbour but a fabulous resource. Like India or Japan, it was not so much Europe's Other as its opposite or foil'.³⁰⁴ And while the representation of Persians and Shia Muslims is relatively complex, the same cannot be said of *Travels*' representations of Turkish and Jewish characters. Anthony's Turkish jailer proclaims 'We Turks are to these Christians for all the world like usurers to young heirs - make picking meat of their carcasses even to the very bones' (121). He is followed by the Great Turk, who follows in the stage tradition of a cruel and despotic Turkish leader. He also, unlike the Sophy, attempts the conversion of Thomas: while he is being racked the Great Turk asks him:

[...] wilt thou forsake thy faith,
Become as we are, and to Mahomet
Our holy prophet, and his Alcoran
Give thy devotion? (124)

This is in keeping with the idea of the Turk as the common enemy: indeed, Jacques Lezra claims 'the variety and overdetermination of their roles [on stage] attest to the undoubtable heterogeneity of Ottoman society'.³⁰⁵ Thus in terms of early modern theatre, the Turk had a nebulous identity which changed in order for the European to 'draw his or her contrastive identity from'.³⁰⁶ Daniel J. Vitkus agrees with the idea of the stage Turk not as an individual but as the umbrella identity for all who symbolise an 'erotic, Islamic evil and [conform] to the European stereotype of the irascible, libidinous Muslim'.³⁰⁷

³⁰³ 'By Mortus Ali and our Persian gods': Multiple Persian Identities in *Tamburlaine* and *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*', in *Early Theatre*, 12.2 (2009), p.236.

³⁰⁴ Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p.11.

³⁰⁵ Jacques Lezra, 'Translated Turks on the Early Modern Stage', in *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theater*, ed. by Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p.161.

³⁰⁶ Lezra, 'Translated Turks', p.161.

³⁰⁷ Daniel J. Vitkus, 'Introduction', in *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England*, ed. by Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p.2.

Zariph is a similarly two-dimensional caricature: a Jewish usurer who, in the same tradition as Shylock and the Jew of Malta, relishes the prospect of destroying Christians. Conspiring with the Persian noble Halibeck, he plots to have Anthony thrown

[...] in the womb
Of unpitied misery, the prison.
There let him starve and rot, his dungeon cry
To Zariph's ears shall be sweet harmony (109)

Indeed, although more complex than Turkish and Jewish stereotypes, even the Persian representation is far from unproblematically positive. The two main Persian characters besides the Sophy and his niece are the courtiers Calimath and Halibeck, who are shown to be duplicitous, jealous and cruel, deceiving the Emperor of Russia into arresting Anthony Shirley, and consistently attempting to bring about the downfall of Robert Shirley with the Sophy.

The Sophy himself, while approving of the Shirleys, is also shown to be innocent, changeable and brutal. At first introduction he demonstrates how his army battle: dividing his own men arbitrarily into 'Persians' and 'Turks', they fight until the Persians return with the 'Turks' heads. When the Shirleys demonstrate a 'Christian battle' he is impressed with the battle but confused as to why the losers are alive:

Sophy: [...] But what means those in bondage so?
Sir Anthony: These are our prisoners.
Sophy: Why do they live? (64)

The simplicity and brevity of the language in this exchange, intensified by splitting the latter part over one line, gives an impression of the Sophy as almost childishly naïve. This technique is repeated when Anthony explains the concept of honour and clemency in victory, and the Sophy replies '[w]e have never heard of honour until now' (64). Characterising foreigners as childlike and innocent in their understanding is a common trope of colonialist interactions with other nations, and betrays the still-problematic aspects of the play's representation of Persian society. Moreover, the Sophy remains ruthless rather than adopting ideas of mercy, and is furious when Robert releases Turkish prisoners when acting on his behalf, nearly executing him. This shows no signs of wavering by the conclusion of the play when Robert forgives his transgressors Halibeck and Calimath for their wrongs to him, asking them to be spared execution, but the Sophy refuses, executing them anyway. Parr suggests that the English audience would have endorsed the Sophy's distinction between their offense to Robert and their offense to the state, but I would go further to suggest that the audience's pleasure in the punishment of stage villains seems to be augmented by a racial dimension.³⁰⁸ It is relatively rare for repentant villains not to be spared death at the end of early modern plays, and that Halibeck and Calimath are originally allowed to believe they will live through Robert's

³⁰⁸ *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p.16.

clemency adds a particularly vindictive twist that may well have been designed for callous audience gratification.

There is also the potential for a culturally imperialist dimension in Robert Shirley winning the Sophy's Niece away from her Persian suitor, and as Parr notes, the dramatists 'avoid the implication either that Robert has gone native or that his action legitimises Persian military custom' by finding an excuse for him not to decapitate his prisoners, as he did in the historical source text by Anthony Nixon.³⁰⁹ Robert is nevertheless still largely subsumed into Persian culture rather than the other way around. He is married to the Sophy's niece only by the Sophy's will, and is granted the right to have his children baptised Christian and to erect a church as graciously bestowed favours (131). The Sophy is completely unfazed by the prospect of Christian presence, implying a sense of control over it and a lack of perceived threat. He offers to aid the christening and says he will be the godfather, but there is no explicit conversion from him, or any other members of Persian society including his niece. Curiously, Robert Shirley's historical wife Sampsonia Khan (who was indeed the Shah's niece through one of his wives) was born into an Orthodox Christian Circassian family, later converting, like Shirley, to Catholicism.³¹⁰ It is interesting that the authors chose not to make her character a Christian or a convert at the end of the play, suggesting, by glossing over the issue, that Muslim-Christian marriage is palatable provided the children are baptised. But again, a distinction is drawn: while Christianity is able to live in only slightly anxious co-existence with the Shia Muslims of the Persian court, conversion is a constant tension in interactions with Turkish Sunni Muslims. As well as the Great Turk attempting to torture a conversion from Anthony, as discussed above, the desire to convert (and conquer) Turks is expressed by the Pope to Anthony when he suggests they 'council, to make Christian Turkish land' (89).

On balance, therefore, *Travels* is still satisfying an audience desire for an entertaining portrayal of cultural otherness, similarly to other plays in the Curtain repertory. As it takes interaction with other cultures as its central theme, however, rather than a comic, largely irrelevant addition to the plot as in many of the other examples above, this may explain why its representations are required to be more complex and rounded. Nevertheless, like much of the Curtain repertory, *Travels* still contains irrelevant appearances of foreigners for the purpose of asserting English superiority, for example in the exchange between an Italian Commedia dell'arte performer and a character named as Will Kemp, overtly a dramatic depiction of the famous English clown who may have still been alive, or had died about three or four years

³⁰⁹ *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p.15; Anthony Nixon, *The three English brothers* (London: Adam Islip[?] for John Hodgets, 1607).

³¹⁰ Richard Raiswell, 'Shirley, Sir Robert, Count Shirley in the papal nobility (c.1581–1628)', in *ODNB*, Oxford University Press (2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/25433>

previously.³¹¹ Kemp's appearance is functioning in complex and multitudinous ways: it is designed to inject a small interlude of the jesting, bawdy word play Kempe and other clowns were popular for, which would otherwise be lacking in the play; it nods to the verisimilitude the play claims for itself, as the historical Anthony Shirley did meet Kemp in Italy in 1601; and metatheatrically it evokes the memory of Kemp on the Curtain stage nearly ten years previously when Kemp had performed there with the Chamberlain's Men.³¹² But it also functions as a competition of wit between two comedic theatrical traditions, and to demonstrate the superiority of English clowning over Italian Commedia.

Kemp's exchange with Harlequin (who in fact is inhabiting a Pantaloon character in both their exchange and in their proposed play, displaying, as Parr notes 'a rather shaky understanding of commedia dell'arte on the part of the writer') is based largely around the idea of cuckolding him with his wife, who is also in the Italian playing company.³¹³ 'Why, hark you,' exclaims Kemp on learning this, 'will your wife do tricks in public?'

Harlequin. My wife can play –

Kemp. The honest woman, I make no question; but how if we cast a whore's part of a courtesan?

Harlequin. O, my wife is excellent at that! She's practised it ever since I married her. 'Tis her only practice.

Kemp. But, by your leave, and she were my wife, I had rather keep her out of practice a great deal (105)

As well as suggesting men in the Italian playing tradition are foolish and probable cuckolds for allowing their wives to perform, the scene evokes a more general stereotype of Italians as jealous. Kemp voices concern that Harlequin will not be able to act convincing jealousy if he is playing his boy, to which Harlequin replies 'I warrant you, I can be jealous for nothing', and Kemp rebuts that he 'should not be a true Italian else' (107). Sandwiched between the scenes with Zariph, the caricatured stage Jew, these episodes are 'less an intricate fabric than a miscellany of related ideas'.³¹⁴ The consistent theme of these episodes, I would argue, is the superiority of the English over the cruelty or stupidity of other nationalities: an attitude which bleeds, albeit it in a more tempered form, into the rest of the play.

Still, it would be reductive and stereotypical to assume that this feature of *Travels*, and the repertory generally, was solely for the gratification of a low-brow, uneducated audience. Parr warns that we 'should be careful about seeing the play only through the eyes of a rival dramatist like Francis Beaumont, whose *Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1608) is a thoroughgoing burlesque of 'adventuring' plays like *Travels* and Heywood's *Four Prentices of London*, mocking

³¹¹ Martin Butler, 'Kemp, William (*d.* in or after 1610?)', in *ODNB*, Oxford University Press (2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/15334>.

³¹² Butler, 'Kemp, William'.

³¹³ *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p.104.

³¹⁴ Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p.14.

the pretensions of a patriotic drama which shows English heroes abroad in a series of implausible triumphs over foreign adversaries'.³¹⁵ As he goes on to point out, although these plays were appealing to 'popular taste at theatres like the Fortune and the Red Bull is unquestionable [...] it is less clear that martial adventure on the stage found favour only with unsophisticated audiences'; moreover, the inverse was true since *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* may have failed in its first production because it 'underestimated the appeal of chivalric subjects to educated tastes'.³¹⁶

³¹⁵ *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p.9.

³¹⁶ *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p.9.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the narratives that have been constructed about the Curtain to date, and reconsidered their origins and evidence. I have suggested that there is a tendency to undervalue or draw negative conclusions about playhouses which there is little remaining evidence of, and that this is exacerbated by reductive assumptions about cheaper outdoor playing spaces. In the Curtain's case, this has manifested in the belief that it was an imitator of the Theatre and therefore lacked integrity, that it was an undesirable venue for playing companies and that the repertory performed there had little artistic value, or if it did this was unappreciated by the audience. A key suggestion of this chapter is that the first generation of playhouses should not be homogenised and considered together, either in terms of their architecture or reputation, and I have attempted to distinguish them from each other as separate, ground breaking and distinct entities.

New evidence from the excavation of the site supports the argument that each playhouse had a unique identity, and that the Curtain was more than a derivative of the Theatre: it is now the first playhouse which is known to have been rectangular (although it is eminently possible that the Red Lion or Newington Butts were as well), and was constructed by adding to existing buildings in a way which is otherwise unknown in playhouse construction. The dimensions also suggest that the playhouse was very large, which coupled with the longevity of its performance history means that the Curtain had the potential for extensive reach and influence.

This chapter has argued for the Curtain's probable strengths in clowning and jiggling, and that this partly accounts for contemporary popularity but scant remaining evidence. It has also highlighted an interest in representations of foreigners and a possible trend of nationalism and xenophobia in the repertory performed there. It is not possible to definitively prove these apparent trends, but they are supported by the idea that individual playhouses had reputations for delivering certain kinds of content and entertainment, despite these being multifaceted and allowing for nuance and shifts over time.

Chapter 4

Salisbury Court playhouse

This chapter will examine how the playhouse at Salisbury Court has been conceptualised in narratives of early modern theatre space. It will survey the key ways the playhouse has been framed and understood, and suggest that it has been damaged by being inaccurately considered a Caroline playhouse due to the erasure of its history after 1642. This has entrenched negative critical opinions traditionally associated with this era, and has positioned it as the third indoor theatre behind the second Blackfriars and Cockpit/Phoenix, not only chronologically but in terms of social position and aesthetic value.

This chapter will argue that the evidence for this position is often questionable and has partly been influenced by bias towards the King's Men and away from 'decadent' Caroline writers. Rather than considering Salisbury Court a transitional space between Jacobean and Restoration playhouses, and reading the associations of these eras back onto the space to form a conceptualisation of it, this chapter will argue that Salisbury Court ought to be re-evaluated independently. The application of this method reveals that Salisbury Court was not necessarily smaller or less lucrative than other public indoor playhouses, and that it drove theatrical innovation and formed part of its unique identity by leading the development of a trend of topographical comedies.

1. Factual overview

Salisbury Court was an indoor playhouse that was built in 1629 and finally ceased to operate as an official playhouse in 1661, although it was used after this, probably until it burned down in the Great Fire five years later.³¹⁷ Performances continued, possibly sporadically, across the civil wars and Commonwealth. It was certainly used for performances between 1647-1649 and William Beeston insinuated that he used Salisbury Court to stage plays at some point between 1652 and 1659.³¹⁸ Beeston undertook considerable work restoring and enlarging the playhouse in 1659, and it was used by the Duke's Company, George Jolly's Company and Beeston himself in the early 1660s.

Salisbury Court was the last new playhouse to be built and successfully operate before the start of the civil wars and was situated by St Bride's and between Fleet Street and the Thames in the ward of Farringdon Without, just to the left of the city wall. It was converted from a barn on the Earl of Dorset's land in 1629, and the first performances are most likely to have been in late 1629 or early 1630. Although Dorset leased the site to Richard Gunnell and William Blagrave on 6 July 1629, Bentley doubts the playhouse was complete by April 1630, and since all London playing was stopped due to plague between 17 April and 12 November, Bentley offers November 1630 as the starting date for performances.³¹⁹ The term of the lease was for 41 years, and the rent £25 for the first half year, and £100 each year after that. Dorset also sold the rights to the ground rent to John Herne of Lincoln's Inn shortly after leasing to Gunnell and Blagrave, presumably because he needed more money than the original settlement would provide him with.³²⁰

The managers of the theatre were important and well-connected: Blagrave was the deputy to Henry Herbert in his position as Master of the Revels, while Gunnell was friends with Edward Alleyn and had previously acted in Prince Henry's Company at the Fortune theatre, moving into management and shareholding around the time they became Palsgrave's Men in 1613.³²¹ They formed a new company composed of boy actors for the playhouse; while it was known by a variety of names in contemporary records, including the Children of the Revels and the Company of the Revels, I will refer to the company as 'the King's Revels', as this is the name it

³¹⁷ Hotson, *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.114.

³¹⁸ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.651; C10 80/15, 1666, 8 May, Wm. Beeston v. Thomas Silver, cited in Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.107.

³¹⁹ *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, pp.94-95.

³²⁰ O. L. Brownstein, 'New Light on the Salisbury Court Playhouse', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 29.2 (1977), p.232.

³²¹ Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, p.94; G. E. Bentley 'The Salisbury Court Theater and Its Boy Players', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 40.2 (1977) p.129; Andrew Gurr, 'Gunnell, Richard (d. 1634)', in ODNB, Oxford University Press (2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/67761>.

has been known by in subsequent scholarship.³²² This young company was quickly replaced at Salisbury Court by the second iteration of Prince Charles' Men, who were resident from 1631-1634, and the King's Revels returned to the playhouse from 1634-1636. Although the King's Revels originated as a boy company and remained so for at least three years, during this later period it is clear that 'the troupe was not a simple old-fashioned boy company [...] for lists of the personnel in 1634 and 1635 give the names of a number of adults'.³²³ The title page of the first edition of *Holland's Leaguer* is unusual in listing the names of the actors, so it is possible to see that in December 1631 at Salisbury Court the actors of Prince Charles' Men were William Browne, Ellis Worth, Andrew Cane, Matthew Smith, James Sneller, Henry Gradwell, Thomas Bond, Richard Fowler, Edward May, Robert Hunt, Robert Stratford, Richard Godwin, John Wright, Richard Fouch, Arthur Savill and Samuel Mannery.³²⁴

Although Gunnell seems to have been financially compelled to sell his interest in the playhouse to Christopher Babham in September 1630, Gunnell and Blagrove managed the playhouse until Gunnell died in October 1634 and Blagrove in late 1636, when it was taken over by Richard Heton.³²⁵ Heton became manager during the long plague closure of 1636-1637, and established a new iteration of Queen Henrietta Maria's Men, largely made up of the remnants of the previous company of the same name. As they sued Richard Brome for breach of contract in the Court of Requests, it is known that by February 1640 the managers of Salisbury Court were Richard Heton, John Robinson and Nathaniel Speed, and the named players of Queen Henrietta Maria's Men were Richard Perkins, Anthony Turnor, William Sherlocke, John Younge, John Sumpner, Edward May, Curtis Grevill, William Wilbraham, Timothy Reade and William Cartwright the younger.³²⁶ Queen Henrietta's Men occupied it from 1637-1642, and it was used by an unknown company during the civil wars.³²⁷ It was recorded that the playhouse was pulled down by soldiers working for sectarians on 24 March 1649 although this appears to have meant that the interior was destroyed rather than the building dismantled.³²⁸

On 25 March 1652 Beeston had purchased the lease from John Herne; although it might not have been fit for use after the events in March 1649, he seems to suggest in his complaint

³²² See, for example, Bentley, 'The Theatre and the Actors', p.105; Gurr, *Shakespearean Playing Companies*, pp.417-436; Martin Butler, 'Exeunt Fighting: Poets, Players and Impresarios at the Caroline Hall Theaters', in *Localizing Caroline Drama: Politics and Economics of the Early Modern English Stage, 1625-1642*, ed. by Adam Zucker and Alan B. Farmer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p.101.

³²³ Bentley, 'The Salisbury Court Theater', p.137.

³²⁴ Marmyon, *Hollands Leaguer*, sig. A3^r.

³²⁵ Bentley 'The Salisbury Court Theater and Its Boy Players' p.129; Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.650.

³²⁶ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.657.

³²⁷ Brownstein, O. L., 'New Light on the Salisbury Court Playhouse', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 29.2 (1977), 231-242

³²⁸ *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.101.

against the carpenters Edward Fisher and Thomas Silver that after taking control of the playhouse ‘there was used in the said house for some time the said Art of Stage playing, until Stage playing was forbidden by the powers than then were’.³²⁹ After the Restoration, the Duke’s Company occupied the playhouse from 5 November 1660 – June 1661, and George Jolly’s company began playing there in autumn 1661. Jolly seems to have left by 13 November 1661, when an order was issued to Jolly and his company at the Cockpit, but may have returned to play there after the Lord Chamberlain issued an order on 26 November 1661 stating that Jolly and his players were now only to act at Salisbury Court.³³⁰ He may, however, have not obeyed this instruction, and at any rate seems to have been gone by the time Beeston – who still owned the lease for the building – was apprehended for playing there without a license in August 1663 and September 1664.³³¹

In terms of the repertory across the playhouse’s lifespan, the playwright most associated with the venue is Richard Brome, who signed a contract to produce three plays a year for the manager Richard Heton, and whose *The Sparagus Garden* at Salisbury Court seems to have been one of the most popular plays of the 1630s, reportedly earning the enormous sum of £1000.³³² Bentley has argued that the first play performed at Salisbury Court is likely to have been *The Muses’ Looking Glass* by Thomas Randolph, although this is not known with certainty.³³³

As with most playhouses of the era, little is known in concrete terms about Salisbury Court’s architectural or interior appearance. In regaining a sense of the playhouse as a building, while in some respects there is significantly more extant evidence than there is relating to the Curtain – thanks to litigation and ownership feuds – in some respects it is not much more revealing. As Brownstein puts it, ‘the data at hand has been oddly difficult to focus’.³³⁴ This is not least because key planks of tangible evidence – the foundations of the building and a contemporary drawing of it – are both missing, and it has not been possible to definitively assert the spot on which the playhouse stood. This is due to the foundations being destroyed when the building was burnt in 1666, although a fairly accurate location is possible to establish from records of

³²⁹ C10 80/15, 1666, 8 May, Wm. Beeston v. Thomas Silver, cited in Hotson, *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.107.

³³⁰ Hotson, *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.114.

³³¹ Hotson, *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.113-114.

³³² Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, pp.102-103; Matthew Steggle, *Richard Brome: Place and Politics on the Caroline Stage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 69.

³³³ *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, p.95. In her appendix of plays performed at indoor playhouses, Sarah Dustagheer lists the first performance as *The Rebellion* by Thomas Rawlins. See ‘List of plays performed at indoor playhouses, 1575-1642’, in *Moving Shakespeare Indoors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.258. However, the rationale for this attribution is not made clear, I have not found this it followed elsewhere, and this puts Rawlins’ play significantly earlier than usually thought. Harbage dates *The Rebellion* as 1636, with limits from 1629-1639 in his *Annals*, pp.134-135.

³³⁴ ‘New Light’, p.231.

the new foundations of buildings in 1677.³³⁵ Wickham has suggested that the Worcester College drawings are of Salisbury Court, but his suggestion has not been widely accepted, and these drawings have been the source of considerable debate: originally assumed to be the Cockpit/ Phoenix and by Inigo Jones, Gordon Higgott has reassigned them to John Webb c.1660.³³⁶ It has also been suggested that they were plans for a theatre that was never built; there is unlikely to be a final consensus, but in any case Wickham's avocation for Salisbury Court has not won much support: David Stevens states there is no substantiation for the claim.³³⁷

Hotson has shown that the walls of the building were made of brick, and that there was a dwelling house attached, most likely the 'lodging of the owner which probably extended over the stage, and lay behind the upper stage'.³³⁸ But it is unclear whether this dwelling house was constructed in the original building, or a new construction by the carpenters Edward Fisher and Thomas Silver in 1660. Nevertheless, Fisher and Silver did construct a room 40 foot square over the playhouse in 1660, which was to be used as a dancing school, and they were also contracted to raise the roof by 30 feet.³³⁹

It is pertinent to consider whether the playhouse's origins as a barn would have affected its appearance and structure as a building. In the 1650s Gunnell and Blagrove's heirs described the agreement between themselves and the Earl of Dorset: they took 'a lease from him of an ould barne standing in Salisbury Court which barne they were tyed by Covenants to lay out upon 800li for Converting the same into a playhouse and to pay for the same play house ye rent of 100li pr annu' for the full term of 41 years', and they further claim that they actually spent 'neare the sum of 1200li in building & finishing the said play house'.³⁴⁰ The very large sum of £1200 must have been enough to transform the visual appearance and interior completely, although the motivations of the petitioners should be taken into account: they were asking to be excused from paying the rent during the Interregnum, justified because so much money had been spent on the building already, and as such would have had cause to exaggerate. Nevertheless, Beeston estimated the building cost as £1000.³⁴¹ Still, it is hard to tell just how extensive the changes were: while the costs were spent on 'building' – presumably construction - as well as 'finishing' the playhouse, the use of 'conversion' suggests that the

³³⁵ Brownstein, 'New Light', p.233. See also Bordinat, 'A New Site for the Salisbury Court Theatre', *Notes & Queries*, 3.2 (1956), pp.51-52.

³³⁶ *Early English Stages*, II, pp.144-147; Higgott, Gordon, *Reassessing the drawings for the Inigo Jones theatre: a Restoration project by John Webb?* (2005), <<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/drama/jacobean/research4.html>> [accessed 6 August 2015].

³³⁷ John Orrell, "Inigo Jones at the Cockpit," *Shakespeare Survey*, 30 (1977), pp.157-68; "The Staging of Plays at the Salisbury Court Theatre, 1630-1642", *Theatre Journal*, 31.4 (1979), p.511.

³³⁸ *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.112.

³³⁹ Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, p.92.

³⁴⁰ Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, pp.89-90.

³⁴¹ Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, p.91.

foundations and outer shell of the building would have remained the same. Although it could have meant to dismantle and rebuild on the same spot with the same wood, this seems like an expensive extravagance that would probably have been avoided if possible.

Much of the debate around Salisbury Court's appearance has focused on its size. Famously, James Wright claimed that Salisbury Court, the Cockpit and the Blackfriars 'were all three Built almost exactly alike, for Form and Bigness'.³⁴² This assertion has caused much confusion and is generally considered to be factually questionable – not least because it was written decades after the playhouse burnt down – with most critics arguing that Salisbury Court was notably smaller than the Cockpit and Blackfriars. Nevertheless, I suggest the evidence for this is uncertain. In 1667, the carpenters Fisher and Silver asserted that the 'piece of ground' obtained for the playhouse was 'one hundred and forty foot in length, and forty-two in breadth', although as this refers to the entire plot of land it is only partially helpful in ascertaining what size the auditorium and stage were.³⁴³ However, as they were contracted to construct a room 40 foot square above the playhouse, the building must have been at least 40 foot wide, and Brownstein concludes that 'the interior dimensions of the auditorium and stage house would be something like 60 feet by 40 feet—only slightly smaller than the 66 by 46 foot interior dimensions of the Blackfriars'.³⁴⁴

Arguing that Salisbury Court *was* substantially smaller than other indoor playhouses, Bentley and Wickham both cite quotations from plays in the repertory to the playhouse's size, in which characters refer to '[m]y little house' or 'this our little spheare'.³⁴⁵ While these could suggest Salisbury Court was unusually small, it seems a distinct possibility that these references are the kind of rhetorical devices used in plays and prologues to refer to playhouses generally; it is not uncommon for early modern dramatists to acknowledge their location's - or the play's - insignificance out of politeness or humility, and also to reflect that they viewed themselves as a microcosmic representation of the wider world. By these standards, playhouses are always small, irrespective of their size. The suggestion that such references in early modern drama are genuine reflections on the space where they were performed is something I have argued against in the previous chapter, demonstrating that the phrase 'cram/ Within this wooden O' is meditating on the transposition of the real world into the limited theatrical environment, rather than being an indication of the size or quality of the playhouse where it was performed.

The other evidence used to argue for Salisbury Court's small size is that the sharers appear to have received a small amount of money. However, this is based on Malone's statement that Henry Herbert received only one pound nineteen shillings from his ninth share of the

³⁴² *Historia Histrionica* (London: G. Croom for William Haws, 1699), p.7.

³⁴³ Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, p.88.

³⁴⁴ 'New Light', p.236.

³⁴⁵ *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, p.93; Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.654-655.

playhouse following the six performances of *Holland's Leaguer*.³⁴⁶ As the papers which Malone used to note this are no longer extant there is a possibility of misinterpretation which is impossible to verify, but even if this is the correct sum it may not be representative of Salisbury Court's takings as a whole. Bentley has argued that *Holland's Leaguer* was performed for six days not because it was popular but because the company had no other plays to perform.³⁴⁷ As such, the number of attendees over the course of this almost unprecedented consecutive run of shows could have been extremely small. Furthermore, if Salisbury Court did not have the capacity to earn a lot of money, it calls into question how *The Sparagus Garden* could have earned as much as £1000. Even if this amount were an exaggeration, it must have still been incredibly lucrative, and thus the audience size must have been at least comparable to other playhouses, calling into question the idea that Herbert's small share was representative of the auditorium's usual capacity.

Moreover, Astington notes that the final scene of Thomas Nabbes' *Microcosmus* demands 'a glorious throne: at the top whereof Love sits betwixt Iustice, Temperance, Prudence and Fortitude, holding two crownes of starres: at the foote upon certaine degrees' other characters sit. As Astington notes, this 'demands height' and 'sounds rather too elaborate to fit within the Salisbury Court discovery space', and as such contributes to the sense that the playhouse was not especially small.³⁴⁸ Moreover, if this masque was performed with anything like original stage directions then it was 'capable of elaborate effects having more to do with stages of Restoration times than those of Shakespeare's'.³⁴⁹

David Stevens uses evidence from Salisbury Court's repertory to construct a model of its interior features, concluding that '[i]n the absence of any acceptable illustrations or detailed descriptions of the interior of the theatre, the plays that were staged there are the best available resources for our speculations on the physical features of the playhouse'.³⁵⁰ Stevens is appropriately cautious in his conclusions: aware of the risks of companies moving between playhouses rapidly and the complicated processes of textual transmission, he considers only plays which are most likely have been written intending performance at Salisbury Court and editions of those plays which are most likely to reflect the Salisbury Court performances. Using this methodology, Stevens concludes that:

1. There were three entrances – a curtained discovery space in the centre of the stage and two entrances at either side (p.518) which were probably hung with hinged doors that could be opened and closed (p.516).

³⁴⁶ Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, p.90.

³⁴⁷ 'The Troubles of a Caroline Acting Troupe: Prince Charles's Company', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 41.3 (1978), p.226.

³⁴⁸ 'The "Messalina" Stage and Salisbury Court Plays', *Theatre Journal*, 43.2 (1991), p.150.

³⁴⁹ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.667.

³⁵⁰ 'The Staging of Plays at the Salisbury Court Theatre, 1630-1642', *Theatre Journal*, 31.4 (1979), pp.511-512.

2. Possibly, but far from certainly, a trap door (p.519).
3. An acting area above of an indeterminable size, which was used relatively rarely and only while action was happening simultaneously on the main stage (pp.519-521).
4. Possible, but unlikely, use of changeable scenery (for *Microcosmus*) (pp.521-522).

As Stevens notes, there is nothing particularly striking about this (unless the playhouse *did* employ changeable scenery): in its main features at least the playhouse seems to fit the perceived archetype of early indoor playhouses. But as Stevens himself notes, ‘script analysis of this type can suggest minimum parameters: we can infer only that certain features of the stage appear to have been necessary for the staging of the plays we examine’.³⁵¹ While none of these features suggest a unique departure from other playhouses in terms of the main features of the stage space, they also do not tell us that Salisbury Court *was* exactly like other indoor performance spaces. The facts are too scarce to accurately reconstruct a picture. The doors at either side, for example, might be presumed to be set in a *frons scenae* facing the audience, as is thought to have been convention, but it is equally possible they were set differently – for example at 90 degree angles, as they were a few decades later in the Dorset Gardens playhouse.³⁵²

As the last new playhouse built before the civil wars, Salisbury Court holds an interesting position in the development of English theatre. Brownstein ruminates that it:

may have represented the sum of experience of the private theatre tradition, or it may have been the most technically advanced, or it may have brought an innovation to the commercial stage in same manner, such as the introduction of continental classicism (from a design by Inigo Jones) or the introduction of changeable scenery. Though all of these suggestions are interesting, they must remain insubstantial speculations until some better grasp of the physical features of the theatre can be found.³⁵³

While it is not possible to say if these architectural innovations took place, Salisbury Court’s repertory is able to demonstrate the innovations that it prompted dramatically. Furthermore, it is important to remember that irrespective of their physical similarities and differences, the three indoor playhouses which housed professional adult companies before the wars were all converted from very different buildings: a barn, a cockpit, and the Parliament Chamber of a monastery. These origins would have had very different resonances and spatial memories attached to them, as well as almost certainly some noticeable architectural variants. As will be apparent in the next section, treatment of Salisbury Court has generally not highlighted the unique aspects of its identity and appearance, but homogenised them with those of the second

³⁵¹ ‘The Staging of Plays’, p.514.

³⁵² Contemporary illustrations of Dorset Gardens Theatre appear to show entrances at the sides of the stage at 90 degree angles. See Elkanah Settle, *The Empress of Morocco* (London: William Cademan, 1673), sig. A4^v.

³⁵³ ‘New Light’, p.231.

Blackfriars and Cockpit/ Phoenix. By considering the representation of Salisbury Court in scholarly narratives, I will be able to reweigh some of the evidence to see whether the current dominant sense of the playhouse appears accurate or a true reflection of its status and influence in the early modern period.

2. Existing scholarship and position in theatre history narratives

Salisbury Court is usually mentioned alongside the second Blackfriars and Cockpit/ Phoenix as one of three public indoor theatres in London before the civil wars. There is certainly some rationale to grouping these playhouses in this way: as described in the first chapter, they were referred to as 'private' houses during the period, in contrast to 'public' open-air theatres, even though this only reflected an ideological distinction based on wealth. However, as discussed in the first chapter, qualifiers to the idea of these three venues being the sole sites of performance indoors include the traditions of children's playing companies, the Inns of Court, the truly private performances of the aristocracy, and the brief presence of Lady Elizabeth's Men at the Whitefriars. As Gurr notes, '[t]he first 'private' playhouses came into use in the decade following the first public amphitheatre' because a playhouse at Paul's was in use in 1575.³⁵⁴

Isolating Salisbury Court, the Cockpit and the second Blackfriars from these other traditions runs the risk of overemphasising how innovative the second Blackfriars was. As Kesson notes in his review of *Moving Shakespeare Indoors*, the book's claims that 'the *Second* Blackfriars was a new kind of theatrical space, not only in 1596 but also in 1608 [...] seem implicitly challenged by its name' (emphasis added).³⁵⁵ Kesson also argues that Burbage's decision to find a regular indoor playing space must have been partly 'to exploit the gap in the market created by the dissolution of the boy companies playing in indoor spaces just a few years earlier', which highlights the broader traditions the three playhouses existed in.³⁵⁶

Indeed, despite observing how far back the origins of indoor playing go, and noting the existence of the playhouse at St Paul's (1575), the first Blackfriars (1576), and the Whitefriars (1606), Gurr suggests that

[o]nce the King's Men started the practice of adult companies offering daily performances at Blackfriars several attempts were made to emulate them. A plan for a playhouse at Porter's Hall in 1615 failed, but a year later Christopher Beeston opened the Cockpit in Drury Lane with an adult company, and in 1629 Richard Gunnell opened a third, Salisbury Court³⁵⁷

While it is appropriate to link venues as part a tradition, it is unclear why the Cockpit and Salisbury Court - built significantly later than the Blackfriars - are an emulation only of the second Blackfriars, rather than the other three already listed, apart from the fact they largely,

³⁵⁴ *Playgoing*, p.22. Gurr also describes the Paul's playhouse as 'adjacent to the Chapter House', but as Herbert Berry points out, this location is based on questionable evidence from 1664. See 'Where was the playhouse in which the boy choristers of St Paul's Cathedral performed plays?', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 13 (2001), p.101. For further discussion of the playhouse's location, also see Roger Bowers, 'The Playhouse of the Choristers of Paul's, c. 1575–1608', *Theatre Notebook*, 54 (2000), 70–85.

³⁵⁵ Review of *Moving Shakespeare Indoors: Performance and Repertoire in the Jacobean Playhouse*, ed. by Andrew Gurr and Farah Karim-Cooper, *SB*, 33.1 (2015), p.183. Italics mine.

³⁵⁶ 'Review of *Moving Shakespeare Indoors*', p.183.

³⁵⁷ *Playgoing*, p.31.

but not entirely, housed adult companies rather than boys. Indeed, complicating this distinction further, the first company at Salisbury Court from c.1630-1631 was indeed a boy company, and was often referred to as the Children of the Revels: a name which recalls the children's company who had previously occupied Whitefriars.³⁵⁸

The assumed innovation of the second Blackfriars spatially and theatrically is not isolated to *Moving Shakespeare Indoors*: it pervades academic discourse about early modern playhouses, largely due to an undertheorized bias towards Shakespeare and the playhouses associated with him. This way of framing theatre construction and space positions Salisbury Court as a derivative of the second Blackfriars, in much the same way as the Curtain has been considered to mimic the Theatre. As such, while these three playhouses are on the one hand homogenised as the 'private' theatres, they are also ranked (with varying degrees of explicitness) in terms of importance and aesthetic value. Partly, this implication begins with the logical decision to list them in chronological order as the Blackfriars, the Cockpit and Salisbury Court. Although logical, perhaps even this phrasing entrenches a particular way of considering these playhouses when repeated frequently enough. Moreover, its ubiquity can subtly erase these playhouses' similarities and connections with other playhouses not included in this short list.

More than this, the three playhouses appear to frequently be listed this way not only as a reference to their chronology, but also to rank their importance, social standing and artistic worth. The strength with which this position is stated varies, and often it is simply implied. The Shakespearean London Theatre research project (SHALT) is more explicit, describing Salisbury Court as 'a considerable success, though its reputation was always slightly lower than that of the elite Blackfriars and also the Cockpit'.³⁵⁹ This demonstrates how the playhouses are frequently ranked first, second and third in terms of importance and success. Similarly, *English Professional Theatre* says that Salisbury Court was 'small and earned small profits. It was in many ways the third private playhouse of Caroline times, behind the second Blackfriars and the Phoenix'.³⁶⁰ Clearly, the implication is that it was not only the third built, but the third in prestige, importance and perhaps – since following directly from the statement about its small profits – popularity and theatrical talent. Ira Clark states that '[w]hile Salisbury Court and the Cockpit in Drury Lane were private theatres, neither proved as courtly or as prestigious as Blackfriars. And only the Cockpit presumed so high'.³⁶¹ It is difficult to see how it is possible to discern the intentions (or presumptions) of the various playhouses, and it is unclear what evidence has been used to conclude this. Perhaps these conclusions originate from a

³⁵⁸ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.649.

³⁵⁹ Shakespearean London Theatres, *Salisbury Court, 1629-42, Indoor theatre*, <<http://shalt.dmu.ac.uk/locations/salisbury-court-1629-42.html>> [accessed 25 June 2015].

³⁶⁰ p.649.

³⁶¹ *Professional Playwrights: Massinger, Ford, Shirley and Brome*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992), p.156.

retrospective appraisal of parts of the playhouses' repertoires, but as this analysis is not forthcoming, it appears more likely that such assessments have been clouded by ideas about different periods and writers.

Clark goes on to suggest that '[a]fter his initial success with the King's Men at the private Blackfriars as well as at the public Globe, Brome concentrated on less prestigious theaters and so on privileged audiences less likely to have been ranked with courtiers'.³⁶² Firstly, by conflating the Globe with the Blackfriars due to them both being inhabited by the King's Men, Clark's phrasing illogically suggests that the audience of the Globe had a higher preponderance of courtiers than Salisbury Court, which is categorically not the case. Secondly, this does not address why, if Salisbury Court was less prestigious and Brome had been successful at the most important venues, he would have then chosen to have 'concentrated' his work on a lesser playhouse. Matthew Steggle, in his monograph on Brome, provides a considerably more neutral opinion of Salisbury Court's status, although still states that the King's Revels, were '[l]ess prestigious than the companies at the Blackfriars and the Cockpit [but] none the less a successful operation'.³⁶³

Nevertheless, I argue that there is not substantial evidence that the audience itself at Salisbury Court was of a lower social rank. The Blackfriars was the only public playhouse which is known to have been visited by a king or queen before Charles II's reign, and it is possible that Charles I and Henrietta Maria attended Heywood's *Love's Mistress* at the Cockpit/ Phoenix, but these limited instances do not seem to provide enough information to judge the entire demographic of the audiences across the period.³⁶⁴ Moreover, Butler notes that the composition of actors in the companies of the Caroline period, and their movement between playhouses, is considerably more fluid than often thought. He argues that after the plague closure of 1636, '[w]hat particularly emerges from these changes is that the profiles of the Cockpit and Salisbury Court troupes were reversed. Heton now led a substantially adult company, while Beeston [at the Cockpit/ Phoenix] had a troupe of youths [and was] occupying the place in the market that had previously been staked out by the Salisbury Court'.³⁶⁵ It is hard to see with this level of company and repertory fluidity how Salisbury Court would have consistently remained of a lower status. Indeed, Butler also notes that after

³⁶² *Professional Playwrights*, p.156.

³⁶³ *Richard Brome*, p.68. See also pp.44-45 for a discussion of Brome's career at different playhouses.

³⁶⁴ The phrasing of the title-page of *Love's Mistress* seems to imply that the King and Queen were present in the playhouse, although there is some ambiguity. The epilogue is certainly addressed to them, although it seems possible that this was only performed in the version at court, but was selected for inclusion in the publication. See Thomas Heywood, *Loves Mistress: Or, The Queens Masque* (London: John Raworth for John Crouch, 1640), sig. A1^r, sig. G4^v.

³⁶⁵ Martin Butler, 'Exeunt Fighting: Poets, Players and Impresarios at the Caroline Hall Theaters', in *Localizing Caroline Drama: Politics and Economics of the Early Modern English Stage, 1625-1642*, ed. by Adam Zucker and Alan B. Farmer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p.111.

Brome had left Salisbury Court for the Cockpit all of the known plays that Heton staged at Salisbury Court ‘in its final years were amateur pieces, and largely by untried writers’.³⁶⁶ While the work of these courtier playwrights has widely been denigrated in terms of artistic worth, it certainly seems to be the case that such drama and authors had a high social status. Indeed, it provides a strong challenge to the notion that the Blackfriars held a clearly superior status while Salisbury Court’s was the lowest. As Butler notes, ‘the Blackfriars had cornered the market in plays of this stamp’; thus, the similarity in the style and form of the two playhouses’ repertoires in the late 1630s and early 1640s argues against wide distinctions in their reputation and social standing.³⁶⁷

Further to this, the entry prices for Salisbury Court were at least equivalent to the Blackfriars, and possibly more expensive: the Praeludium to *The Careless Shepherdess*, which is set explicitly in Salisbury Court, sees a tight-fisted citizen called Thrift unsuccessfully attempt to haggle the minimum admission price down from a shilling (twelve pence) to a groat (four pence). On the other hand, Blackfriars’s cheapest admission was six pence: Jonson refers to the ‘shops Foreman, or some such braue sparke,/ That may iudge for his six-pence’ in his prefatory verses to *The Faithful Shepherdess*, and to ‘sinfull sixe-penny Mechanicks’ in the prologue to *The Magnetic Lady*.³⁶⁸

Admittedly, there is a possibility that prices increased in all playhouses over time. *The Faithful Shepherdess* was originally performed in the first Blackfriars in 1608 and *The Magnetic Lady* was licensed by Henry Herbert in 1632, whereas *The Careless Shepherdess* was revived (with the Praeludium added) at Salisbury Court in 1638. Nevertheless, the six year difference between performances of *The Magnetic Lady* at the Blackfriars and *The Careless Shepherdess* at Salisbury Court does not seem sufficiently large to warrant a doubling of prices. It is possible that these sources are misleading: perhaps the doorkeeper does not suggest Thrift sits in the six pence gallery because it would ruin the comedic point of the citizen’s character. However, as the price of entry is repeatedly discussed, with Thrift angling for cheap admission and finally concluding he will go to a different venue which charges two pence, it would be strange for the cheapest seats not to be mentioned. It is true that Thrift is taken aback by the cost of entry, but this seems in keeping with the central stereotype of his character. Indeed, he asks explicitly:

³⁶⁶ ‘Exeunt Fighting’, p.120.

³⁶⁷ ‘Exeunt Fighting’, p.120.

³⁶⁸ John Fletcher, *The faithfull shepheardesse. By Iohn Fletcher* (London: Thomas Cotes for Richard Meighen, 1629), sig. A3^r; Jonson, *The workes of Benjamin Jonson. The second volume*, sig. B1^v.

Thrift: [...] What's your lowest price?
Bolt: I told you at first word.
Thrift: What a shilling?³⁶⁹

As such, with no evidence to suggest that Salisbury Court cost less than the Blackfriars and some evidence to suggest it may have cost more, it is worth considering why elite individuals who did not rank as highly as courtiers would have chosen to go there rather than the Blackfriars, or why the playhouse would have been attractive to audience members if it was of a lower status but as - or more - expensive.

As both of Jonson's comments are critical of the low social status of some members of the Blackfriars audience, it is clearly incorrect to consider the venue homogeneously aristocratic. Jonson is clearly critical of spectators with a manual trade, while the writer of the Praeludium similarly makes fun of the unsophisticated tastes of both the country gentleman, who is distressed there is no fool in the play and that thus it will be tedious, and the citizen Thrift, who eventually decides to

[...] hasten to the money Box,
And take my shilling out again, for now
I have considered that it is too much;
I'll go to th'Bull, or Fortune, and there see
A Play for two pence, with a Jig to boot.³⁷⁰

Before Jonson, Beaumont also wrote a prefatory verse for the second edition of *The Faithful Shepherdess* which criticised the tastes and sophistication of the Blackfriars audience. Beaumont claims that 'a thousand men in judgment sit' but '[s]carce two o' which can understand the laws/ Which they should judge by'.³⁷¹ Presumably Beaumont is referring to classical unities and academic theories of playwriting and as such is criticising the education and intelligence of the audience, although probably with some exaggeration and the ulterior motive of consoling his friend for the play's failure. This sense is compounded when Beaumont concludes that he likes the idea of the play's written publication because

Your censurers must have the quality
Of reading, which I am affraid is more
Then halfe your shreudest iudges had before³⁷²

It seems unlikely that half of the Blackfriars audience was illiterate, but this exaggerated claim makes it hard to deny that there was social diversity at both Blackfriars and Salisbury Court, even if the poorer members were sometimes resented by playwrights or their tastes ridiculed.

³⁶⁹ Thomas Goffe, *The Careles Shepherdess. A Tragi-comedy Acted before the King and Queen, And at Salisbury-Court, with great Applause* (London: Richard Rogers and William Ley, 1656), p.2.

³⁷⁰ Goffe, *The Careles Shepherdess*, p.5; p.8.

³⁷¹ Francis Beaumont, "To my friend Master Iohn Fletcheer, vpon his faithfull Shepheardesse" in *The faithfull Shepheardesse. Iohn Fletcher* (London: Edward Allde for R. Bonian and H. Walley, 1610(?)), sig. A4^v.

³⁷² "To my friend", sig. A4^v.

Despite this, as I have outlined above, the central feature of Salisbury Court's reputation – one that occurs in most passing references to it, as well as fuller accounts – is that it was the third indoor playhouse in every sense of the word. While I am not refuting altogether the possibility that Salisbury Court was a less prestigious venue, it is important to note how much effect dominant critical phrasings can have on influencing thought without the position necessarily having been explicitly debated or decided – and indeed, this influence holds the potential to affect the perceptions of scholars when they come to consider the subject. Further, it is worth reconsidering whether all of the evidence used to suggest its lower position is in fact strong enough to be able to conclude this. Partly, as cited above in *English Professional Theatre*, this idea is prompted by the idea that Salisbury Court was smaller than the other auditoriums; as discussed in the previous section I have doubts about whether this can be concluded with certainty from the evidence.

In regards to taking smaller profits, this is primarily evidenced by Edmund Malone's recording of Henry Herbert receiving a sum of one pound nineteen shillings, following a six day run of *Holland's Leaguer*. Malone also wrote that this was 'in virtue of the ninth share which he possessed as one of the proprietors of that house', and as such it has been surmised that the amount represented a ninth of the entire takings for the six performances.³⁷³ This amount is so small in comparison to other recorded takings that Adams argued that Malone had misinterpreted what was written, and that Herbert was simply in receipt of an annual gratuity in his role as Master of the Revels, although Bentley discounts this idea, accepting Malone's conclusion that one pound nineteen shillings was a ninth of the profits from those six performances.³⁷⁴ Bentley concludes that thus 'the total return to all housekeepers for six performances must have been £17.11s. When one recalls that a single performance of a revived play at Blackfriars had brought the housekeepers £17.10s. in 1628; £9.16s. in 1629; £12.4s. in 1630; £13 in 1631 and £15 in 1632 [...] it is evident that the paid admissions at Salisbury Court can have been only a fraction of those at Blackfriars'.³⁷⁵

There are three ways in which this evidence is doubtful in drawing the conclusion the playhouse in general had small profits. As mentioned above, the record is no longer extant, and as such these figures rely on Malone's recording of it which raises some potential of a misreading or inaccurate transcription. Moreover, there is no certainty that Shakerley Marmion, the author of *Holland's Leaguer* who Malone was transcribing, was correct in his belief that Herbert possessed a ninth share of the playhouse. Even supposing Marmion was correct, and the amount paid was as a result of dividends owed in relation to this, the question

³⁷³ Malone, iii, p.232. Written by Shakerley Marmion, cited in Bawcutt, p.174.

³⁷⁴ *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, p.90.

³⁷⁵ *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, VI, p.93.

still remains whether the sum paid was a share of the total income, total profit, or a different amount based on other agreements which involved financial subtractions or additions.

Finally, even presuming that the payment *was* representative of a ninth of the entire box office takings for the performances, *Holland's Leaguer* may only have been played for six days straight because the company had no other plays rather than because it was extraordinarily popular. It seems impossible that it was the case that *Holland's Leaguer* both had a six-day run because of extraordinary popularity – and therefore presumably large audiences – and that the money taken was only a fraction of that taken at the Blackfriars, as then it would be difficult to see how Salisbury Court could be a functioning, profitable enterprise.

In any case, it is hard to see how these figures could be representative of the two playhouses' average takings: even if Blackfriars was a playhouse that did not struggle for audiences in the way some others did, Salisbury Court would not have been financially viable if it had consistently taken only a sixth as much profit. As such, even if the figure is accurate, this one instance of apparently low takings can hardly be taken to speak for the entire lifespan profitability of Salisbury Court, especially as it does not take into account evidence which suggests the opposite: Brome's *The Sparagus Garden* reportedly took £1000, and the conversion of the building was recorded as £1000. These figures are equally problematic, but it demonstrates that one financial record is not enough to draw conclusions about a playhouse's size or popularity generally. Henslowe's records of the Rose's takings show that his average income from a play was less than half the maximum amount he took, suggesting that playhouses were not necessarily very full (on average less than half of their capacity) unless a play was especially scandalous or well-received.³⁷⁶ As such, it is possible that *Holland's Leaguer* was simply not a popular play, and its takings were further undermined by it being played for more days than demand required.

Indeed, Prince Charles's Men, who performed *Holland's Leaguer* at Salisbury Court, did not remain at the venue for a particularly long period of time, leaving to move to the Red Bull in 1633.³⁷⁷ Considering the career of the company at this latter venue, Astington notes that the company 'was to dominate the Red Bull for the final decade of the theatre's life' and that their playing style during that period 'gave rise to most of the interregnum and Restoration reminiscences about the Bull'.³⁷⁸ It is possible, then, that Prince Charles's Men chose to move because they did struggle to make a profit in the Salisbury Court with their distinctive repertory and playing style: something that did not apply to the second residency of the King's Revels, who remained there successfully for nearly a decade, until the disruption caused by the

³⁷⁶ Gurr, *Playgoing*, p.20.

³⁷⁷ John Astington, 'Playing the Man: Acting at the Red Bull and the Fortune', *Early Theatre*, 9.2 (2006), p.138.

³⁷⁸ 'Playing the Man', p.137.

civil wars. Astington agrees that the ‘calculations behind the move were probably economic’ for Prince Charles’ Men, but takes the position that they were looking to increase existing success by seeking larger audiences and profit potential rather than escape failure at Salisbury Court.³⁷⁹ Nevertheless, it is also a distinct possibility that their style was not suited to the playhouse and thus they did fail to generate much profit during this early run of *Holland’s Leaguer*, which was clearly offering something very different to the academic boy-company drama the playhouse had housed previously. Of course, the possibility that Prince Charles’s Men struggled at Salisbury Court does not imply that the playhouse had small profits generally – indeed, since the evidence which has been used to suggest low profitability derives from their residency, it rather acts as a challenge to this idea.

One aspect of the evidence discussed above which has not been dwelt on is the significance of Henry Herbert being a shareholder, if this was the case. It is not clear exactly what the implications of this would have been on the importance and power of Salisbury Court in the theatrical market, but it seems logical to hypothesise that with the Deputy Master of the Revels as its co-owner, and the possibility that the Master of the Revels was a shareholder or somehow in receipt of profits, Salisbury Court may have held more influence or impunity than other playhouses.

Another reason for the denigration of Salisbury Court appears to be value judgements about the plays performed there: Phillip Bordinat concludes his thesis on the playhouse by stating that it ‘is not particularly important on account of the plays presented there’.³⁸⁰ While the second Blackfriars is linked with Fletcher, Webster and Jonson as well as Shakespeare, Salisbury’s Court’s strongest connection to an author is Richard Brome, who has been denigrated both as a decadent Caroline playwright, and – rather contradictorily – dismissed as unintellectual and crass due to his working class origins and his probable employment as a menial servant for Ben Jonson before becoming a playwright. In a recent monograph on the playwright, Steggle reappraises his importance, noting that he has been placed as ‘intellectually disadvantaged and culturally belated – a “son of Ben” a generation behind the pace’ by writers and critics well into the second half of the twentieth century.³⁸¹

Associations of authors with playhouses are more complicated than this, however, and most playwrights produced plays for a variety of venues, with many plays performed in more than one location: Brome also wrote plays which were performed at the Blackfriars, Cockpit and Red Bull. Moreover, Brome’s poor reputation connects to another significant aspect of Salisbury Court’s denigration in traditional scholarship: the associations which have been made

³⁷⁹ ‘Playing the Man’, p.138.

³⁸⁰ ‘A Study of the Salisbury Court Theatre’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 1952), p.272.

³⁸¹ *Richard Brome*, p.3.

with Salisbury Court because it was built after 1625. As the only playhouse in the canon constructed after Charles I's accession to the throne, Salisbury Court has not entirely been included in the perceived 'golden age' of Jacobean drama. As Brome's reputation has suffered in part due to his categorisation as a Caroline playwright, so Salisbury Court's reputation has been damaged by being classed as the only Caroline theatre.

The problems of the 'Caroline' theatre

Conceptualising Salisbury Court as a Caroline theatre distinguishes it from other early modern playhouses, which are considered Elizabethan, Jacobean or Restoration. This has partly sparked interest in the playhouse: Bordinat states that it is of interest because 'it was, chronologically, the only truly Caroline playhouse; and theatrical activity there must have been indicative of contemporary dramatic trends'.³⁸² The second part of this claim is suspect because it demonstrates how this retrospective periodisation can impose narratives which are not helpful to understanding how performance was experienced at the time, and moreover risks information about the playhouse being overextended and applied to the entire period, and vice versa.

Moreover, being conceptualised as 'Caroline' brings negative connotations. Martin Butler has inaugurated a new wave of understanding of drama in the 1630s, effectively challenging traditional assumptions of it as apolitical, frivolous and of little artistic merit.³⁸³ Nevertheless, these beliefs about drama and playwrights from this era are persistent: Sanders notes that 'theatre histories gloss over the Caroline period, either ignoring it completely or presenting it as a period of aberration, of a falling-off from the high aesthetic achievements of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, or as a poor precursor of Restoration drama'.³⁸⁴ I suggest these narratives have also extended to the playhouses: as Butler argues, the 1630s were the decade when it is thought 'the court finally "invaded" the theatre'.³⁸⁵ These pejorative assumptions about the worth of everything tainted by the 'Caroline' label appear to account for much of the marginalisation which has been discussed above, as Bordinat makes clear when he states that Salisbury Court 'provides a useful picture of the transition between two more interesting periods, the Elizabethan and the Restoration'.³⁸⁶

The effects of the Caroline label are more complicated than the generalisations made about the Curtain as an unsavoury place for 'citizen' playgoers: on the contrary, Salisbury Court is acknowledged as a high class, elite venue, albeit with accompanying connotations of

³⁸² 'A Study of the Salisbury Court Theatre', p.272.

³⁸³ *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.1-6.

³⁸⁴ *Caroline Drama: The Plays of Massinger, Ford, Shirley and Brome* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1999), p.4.

³⁸⁵ *Theatre and Crisis*, p.1.

³⁸⁶ 'A Study of the Salisbury Court Theatre', p.272.

decadence and sycophancy towards the court. For this reason, Bentley excludes *The Costlie Whore* from the Salisbury Court repertory because it finds it too crude to believe it would have been performed there.³⁸⁷ This is despite, as Stevens points out, there being plenty of other plays performed at the playhouse with a similar subject matter.³⁸⁸ This methodology – although common until relatively recently – enforces self-perpetuating distinctions based on questionable assumptions about taste and social class. Simultaneously, however, Salisbury Court has a lower reputation because of the year it opened: like Caroline drama generally, it is assumed to be inferior to its dramatic precursors and to have less intellectual integrity.

In addition to the negative assumptions and questionable treatment of evidence which accompany the Caroline label, the first part of Bordinat's claim is also not strictly accurate: Salisbury Court is not 'chronologically, the only truly Caroline playhouse', because it did not solely operate during Charles I's reign. The playhouse is unique in being the only public playhouse which was successfully constructed in Charles I's reign; the second Fortune was completed in 1623, and other plans to construct playhouses during the 1630s did not come to fruition.³⁸⁹ But the 'Caroline' epithet reinforces a limited time-span for Salisbury Court's consideration as a canonised playhouse. It erodes the venue's continuing activity and value until 1666, when it burnt down. Indeed, as the area surrounding the Curtain was still referred to as a playhouse in 1698, there is some evidence that the theatrical resonances of Salisbury Court's existence actively persisted after this: there is a reference to an 'academy' for young actors at Salisbury Court in 1679.³⁹⁰ Despite clear evidence of the playhouse's use during the wars and Restoration, Salisbury Court's life after 1642 can be all but ignored: Astington states that 'both types of playhouse [i.e. indoor and outdoor] are mentioned in the intermittent attempts to revive playing surreptitiously during the Interregnum, and at the Restoration the outdoor Red Bull was reused for a season or two'.³⁹¹ This implies that no house apart from the Red Bull was active in the 1660s, eclipsing the Restoration stage life of both Salisbury Court and the Cockpit/Phoenix.

One way to challenge the problems of periodisation outlined above is to shift focus towards the entire lifespans of theatres, rather than an overemphasis on start dates. A snapshot of the playhouses producing drama in 1640 would render the Fortune, Cockpit, Blackfriars, Red Bull, Globe and Hope, who were all also operating, just as much a part of the 'Caroline' theatrical landscape as Salisbury Court. Yet these venues are not tainted by association with the Caroline

³⁸⁷ *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, V, p.1313.

³⁸⁸ 'The Staging of Plays at Salisbury Court', p.523.

³⁸⁹ Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, IV, p.208.

³⁹⁰ Francis Smith, *Clod-pate's ghost, or, A dialogue between Justice Clod-Pate and his quondam clerk honest Tom Ticklefoot* (London: n. pub., 1679), p.2.

³⁹¹ 'Why the theatres changed', in *Moving Shakespeare Indoors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.30.

period, as their reputations tend to be derived from the individuals and productions that occurred towards the start of their lifespans. Londoners in 1640 would not have made a distinction: even if they considered some playhouses ‘new’ and others ‘old’, or remembered what had happened at some venues in the past, this would only have been part of the complex web of associations that made up the various playhouses’ spatial identities. Throughout this thesis I have argued that the division of plays and playhouses before and after 1642 is overpronounced, and in this instance ceasing to consider Salisbury Court for the 24 years that it operated as a playhouse after this allows negative narratives to be perpetuated. As such, the next section will consider the life of Salisbury Court after 1642 in more detail.

3. Salisbury Court after 1642

I have argued in the previous section that Salisbury Court ought not to be conceptualised as a Caroline theatre because it has a performance history outside of the reign of Charles I. It continued to be used to stage performances during the civil wars, and was one of the early venues after the Restoration. Salisbury Court was used by the Duke's Company from 5 November 1660 to June 1661, when they moved to Lisle's Tennis Court, and then by George Jolly's company in autumn 1661, who seem to have left soon after to play at the Cockpit due to inconvenient playing conditions and high rent charged by William Beeston.³⁹² Jolly was ordered to stop playing at the Cockpit and return to Salisbury Court, although it is unsure if he did or for how long, as Beeston was apprehended for playing there without a license in August 1663 and September 1664. It is unclear whether Beeston played there regularly or not: while there is 'no record of long-continued acting at the Salisbury Court after Jolly left it', it is also possible that Beeston and his company did play there regularly and illicitly, and were rarely apprehended.³⁹³ The last record of Salisbury Court being used as a playhouse was Beeston's caution exactly two years before it burnt down in September 1666, although as Beeston had clearly not been deterred from using the playhouse when the same thing happened the year previously it is possible that he continued to use it during these two years.

In September 1648, *The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer* claimed that '[s]tage plays were daily acted either at the Bull or Fortune or the private house at Salisbury Court'.³⁹⁴ This suggests that there was only one performance per day which rotated around the different playhouses, although this is undermined by events on 2 January 1649, when soldiers raided Salisbury Court, the Cockpit, the Red Bull and the Fortune simultaneously. The raid is described thus:

at Salisbury Court they were taken on the stage, the play being almost ended, and with many ... lighted torches they were carried to Whitehall with their players' clothes upon their backs. In the way, they oftentimes took the crown from his head who acted the king and in sport would oftentimes put it on again. Abraham [a boy playing a woman] had a black satin gown on, and before he came into the dirt he was very neat in his white-laced pumps. The people not expected such a pageant looked and laughed at all the rest, and not knowing who he was, they asked what had that lady done.³⁹⁵

It is also specified that the players at Salisbury Court were treated better than those at the Cockpit as they did not resist, and had their clothes returned when they were released without them being damaged. This treatment does not suggest harsh treatment of illicit performances

³⁹² Hotson, *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, pp.113-114.

³⁹³ Hotson, p.114.

³⁹⁴ 12-19 September 1648, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.646.

³⁹⁵ *The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer*, 2-9 January 1648/9, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.669.

by the authorities, even though the anecdote demonstrates that drama was engaging with ideas of kingship by staging royalty, and that the Parliamentary soldiers also read the situation as amusingly synecdochical of what was happening in a wider political sense.

There was a further raid on Salisbury Court on 5 or 6 October 1647, which was reported in three publications: *Perfect Occurrences*, *Mercurius Pragmaticus* and *Mercurius Melancholicus*. *Perfect Occurrences* says that the ‘sheriffs of the City of London with their officers went thither and found a great number of people, some young lords and other eminent persons’. The men, and, notably, women, who had the money boxes ran away and the audience ‘cried out for their moneys but slunk away like a company of drowned mice without it’, and it is specified that ‘Tim Reade, the fool’ was arrested.³⁹⁶ As Timothy Reade was a prominent comedic performer before the wars, and was one of the interlocutors in the 1641 pamphlet *The Stage-Players complaint*, he could easily have been, or been perceived to be, the ringleader or organiser of the performance.³⁹⁷ The consequences of playing do not appear draconian if the audience felt brave enough to demand refunds, and the result of an illicit performance was the breaking-up of the event with seemingly only one short-term arrest of a prominent theatrical figure.

This is the only instance where the play being performed is named: it is specified as ‘A King and No King, formerly acted at the Blackfriars by His Majesty’s servants about eight years since’.³⁹⁸ The performances that took place during the civil wars cannot exactly be considered to form part of a planned repertory, or to strongly reflect the identity of the performance space: Munro notes that the wars ‘broke down the distinctions between companies and repertories, and actors performed when and where they could’.³⁹⁹ This prompts the idea that the wars had a homogenising effect on playhouse identity: if there was a significant reduction in the volume of playing the reduced ability to be selective for the companies and, presumably, for audiences, would have meant that individual identity was no longer as important as availability. It should also be noted, however, that while the repertories from before the wars may have been scrambled the plays which were selected for performance were under intense selection pressure, and it is noteworthy that both the plays mentioned in the raid clearly engaged with ideas of monarchy and kingship.

Although they likely performed more than these from their repertory, the plays Pepys saw the Duke’s Company perform at Salisbury Court in 1660-1661 were *The Maid in the Mill* by Fletcher and Rowley; *The Mad Lover* by Fletcher; *The Changeling* by Middleton and Rowley; *The*

³⁹⁶ *Perfect Occurrences*, 1-8 October 1647, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.669.

³⁹⁷ *The Stage-Players Complaint*. In *A pleasant Dialogue betweene Cane of the Fortune, and Reed of the Friars. Deploring their sad and solitary conditions for want to Employment. In this heavie and Contagious time of the Plague in London* (London: Tho. Bates, 1641).

³⁹⁸ *Perfect Occurrences*, 1-8 October 1647, cited in Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.669.

³⁹⁹ ‘Actors, Plays and Performances in the Indoor Playhouses, 1625–42: Boy Players, Leading Men and the Caroline Ensemble’, *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 44 (2014), p.67.

Queen's Masque (Love's Mistress) by Heywood; *The Bondman* by Massinger; *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* by Fletcher; *The Nightwalker (The Little Thiefe)* by Fletcher, and revised by Shirley; and the anonymous *Love's Quarrel*, which is no longer extant. Pepys' perception of the quality of the Duke's Company at Salisbury Court was good: after the company had moved to Lisle's, he records that he and his wife

saw "The Bondman" which of old we both did so doat on, and do still; though to both our thinking not so well acted here (having too great expectations), as formerly at Salisbury-court.⁴⁰⁰

He also specifies a preference for the acting at Salisbury Court to that of the King's Company at Gibbons', at least in *The Queen's Mask (Love Mistress)*. He states

'[a]fter dinner I went to the theatre [i.e. Gibbons' Tennis Court], and there saw "Love's Mistress" done by them, which I do not like in some things as well as their acting in Salsbury [sic] Court'.⁴⁰¹

The final performance Pepys saw at Salisbury Court was *Tis Pity She's a Whore*, which was probably performed by Jolly's company, or possibly Beeston's.⁴⁰² Pepys describes it as 'a simple play and ill acted', and this assessment of the unknown company's acting abilities, and the transfer of his loyalty to Lisle's along with the Duke's Company, seem to account for the cessation of his attendance at Salisbury Court.

As repertory distinctions had been erased during the wars, it is less important to draw conclusions from the plays performed there than from the fact that Salisbury Court was still designated as a space for performance, which is reiterated by Beeston's extension and conversion of the space in 1659-1660, and its subsequent years of use. While it is not possible to consider the repertories of Salisbury Court before, during and after the wars as forming a continuum in terms of content, they are still linked through the memories of the individuals who lived through the period. The performances during the wars and after the Restoration would have layered over the top of the impression of the playhouse and its repertory had formed before the wars. In the following section, I will suggest that the playhouse had a particularly strong association with the development of urban place-realist comedies, and that this would have formed one dimension of the playhouse's unique reputation, as well as being one way that Salisbury Court drove theatrical innovation and development.

⁴⁰⁰ 4 November 1661.

⁴⁰¹ 11 March 1661.

⁴⁰² 9 September 1661.

4. Topographical comedy in Salisbury Court's pre-war repertory

Defining 1630s place realist drama

While it is difficult to isolate trends and differences across the repertories of early modern playhouses throughout their lifespans because of the sheer volume of work, it is productive to consider the relationship of generic innovations in the theatrical industry to their locations in physical playhouse spaces. The trend of place realism in 1630s comedies links particularly clearly to Salisbury Court when it first opened, and as such I argue that the playhouse was of primary importance in driving this trend. Moreover, I will argue that place realism was not a frivolous or superficial trend, but held great satirical and socially reflective power: topographical comedies attempt to influence public opinion, politics and behaviour at the start of Charles I's Personal Rule, a period which was beginning to show political and ideological strain. Additionally, as topographical concerns continued to be unusually important to English drama for centuries after, it is apparent that Salisbury Court and its place realist repertory had a significant influence on dramatic tradition.

Place realism is a sub-genre of city comedy, and it is usually accepted that there was a cluster of plays which employed it in the early 1630s. As well as using a fashionable or infamous London location as one of the key settings in the play, the titles of place realist plays refer to that locale, probably as a marketing tool to pique the interest of playgoers. Many of these plays were written for Salisbury Court during its first few years as a playhouse, although the trend was not confined to the venue, with some productions subsequently occurring at the Cockpit/Phoenix. Nevertheless, I suggest that this trend is a theatrical development primarily associated with Salisbury Court, which demonstrates that Salisbury Court had an active role in the trends and innovations of the theatrical market.

There is some debate about the origins and definition of place-realism, and which plays should be included in the categorisation. The distinct sub-genre was identified by Richard H. Perkinson, who argued that the categorisation is defined by plays which are a 'comedy of manners and intrigues of habitués of some definite, popular locality' rather than just being titled with reference to particular locations.⁴⁰³ However, he doesn't restrict the phenomenon to the early 1630s, naming 22 examples from the Elizabethan to Restoration period: nine Elizabethan and Jacobean, five Caroline and eight Restoration. Indeed, Perkinson considers place realism to be a tradition of English theatre generally, focusing on the Restoration and situating Caroline, Jacobean and Elizabethan examples as the 'origins' of the trend. Later, Theodore Miles argued in an influential essay that place realism was a particular Caroline sub-

⁴⁰³ 'Topographical Comedy in the Seventeenth Century', *ELH*, 3.4 (1936), p.270.

genre distinct from its forbearers and descendants.⁴⁰⁴ Miles suggests a specific vogue of six Caroline plays that can be considered completely distinct from place realism in other periods: he adds Shakerley Marmion's *Holland's Leaguer* to Perkinson's original five, which are *Hyde Park*, *Covent Garden Weeded*, *Covent Garden*, *Tottenham Court*, and *The Sparagus Garden*. Paul Miller later reassesses the evidence and agrees with Perkinson, arguing that the place realism of the 1630s and be situated as a trend which exists in a wider dramatic context.⁴⁰⁵

I strongly agree with Perkinson and Miller: the first publication of *Bartholomew Fair* in 1631, coupled with Jonson's clear influence on both Brome and Nabbes, highlights that periodisation should not be allowed to prompt assumptions that these dramatic antecedents were in the distant past. Although distinct groups such as that posited by Miles are neat, they are rarely accurate: even the most innovative cultural productions have a grounding in previous traditions. Miles' definition stipulates that the plays must be named after the location and be partially set there; they must contain more than just allusions to real places but not be so wholly interrelated that the plot cannot be extracted from it (as he argues is the case in *Bartholomew Fair*). These distinctions are subjective and artificially impose categorisations which have been constructed later. Instead, Perkinson acknowledges that the location of a topographical comedy can be embedded in the plot to differing degrees: either wholly, like *Bartholomew Fair*, partially, or hardly at all, simply using that locale as a convenient unifying backdrop.⁴⁰⁶ Although the level of engagement with the setting varies, the significance of location in the topographical comedies of the 1630s is always strong, and more than is first apparent. Indeed, I will argue that this was a key aspect of their engagement with the contemporary social and political landscape, and that often locations were utilised to influence social change.

Thus, although there was a cluster of place realist plays in the early 1630s, this was not a sub-genre unique to this short window of the Caroline period, but rather a resurgence and development of existing forms of comedy, and one which had an impact on the importance of place in other Caroline and later drama. As I argue throughout this thesis, theatrical trends and developments are invariably related to their antecedents, and are always enmeshed in what has gone before, both dramatically and culturally. To argue that developments are completely new rather than adaptations of existing or previous trends is usually naïve, and is particularly encouraged by the problematic boundaries erected by monarchical periodisation. Miles' discussion of *Bartholomew Fair* as Jacobean gives the impression that it belongs to a completely different era to the Caroline place-realist comedies. In reality, Jonson was still producing plays,

⁴⁰⁴ 'Place-Realism in a Group of Caroline Plays', *The Review of English Studies*, 18.72 (1942).

⁴⁰⁵ 'The Historical Moment of Caroline Topographical Comedy', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 32.3 (1990).

⁴⁰⁶ 'Topographical Comedy', p.273.

and *Bartholomew Fair* was first performed in 1614 – less than two decades before *Holland's Leaguer* was performed at Salisbury Court in 1631.

Bartholomew Fair's popularity meant it would hold a strong place in the collective memory, which would have been refreshed when it was first published in 1631. Indeed, Perkinson suggests that this publication partly prompted the resurgence in place realist drama, and in *The Weeding of Covent Garden* (1632) Justice Cockbrain's reference to his 'ancestor Overdone' references Adam Overdone in *Bartholomew Fair*.⁴⁰⁷ Brome undeniably situates himself and his characters in the Jonsonian tradition; the connection with existing city comedy traditions could not be clearer than a character naming himself as the descendant of a famous character. Brome positions Cockbrain not so much as Overdone's biological as his dramatic heir, and demonstrates his expectation that the audience will know Jonson's character, by signalling to them how to read Cockbrain's behaviour and dramatic function.

As such, topographical comedy in the 1630s was not a total innovation but a resurgence, re-adaptation and development of an existing form. The place realist drama saw the opportunity to take the meanings encoded in earlier kinds of urban comedy and develop them for a new political landscape. This in turn produced a model which had an important influence on the drama of the Restoration – and beyond – testifying to the ongoing importance of the innovations of this group of plays. Adam Zucker corroborates this sense of place realism's origins and ongoing impact, stating that the plays 'took up older narrative paradigms of comedy to create a locationally specific kind of play that would influence the theater's urban perspective for decades to come'.⁴⁰⁸

Plays in the place realism tradition

Critics have differed in the plays they define as place realist. Perkinson names five topographical comedies from the 1630s: James Shirley's *Hyde Park* (April 1632); Richard Brome's *The Weeding of Covent Garden* (1632); Thomas Nabbes' *Covent Garden* (probably 1633); Nabbes' *Totenham Court* (1633); and Brome's *The Sparagus Garden* (1635). To this, Miles adds Shakerley Marmion's *Holland's Leaguer* (December 1631). Miller again discounts *Holland's Leaguer* because it is an 'obscure, unrealistic, allegorical play bearing no more than token resemblance to the other Caroline plays'.⁴⁰⁹ I challenge the legitimacy of these reasons; obscurity holds no bearing on its generic status, and discrepancies that do exist are partly due to scholarship's subsequent treatment of the texts. Retrospective fame is not relevant to

⁴⁰⁷ 'Topographical Comedy', p.278.

⁴⁰⁸ 'Laborless London: Comic Form and the Space of the Town in Caroline Covent Garden', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 5.2 (2005), p.96.

⁴⁰⁹ 'The Historical Moment', p.350.

whether a play belonged to, or indeed inaugurated, a dramatic trend. Indeed, if the inaugural six-day run of *Holland's Leaguer* was due to its popularity rather than Prince Charles' Company possessing a limited repertory, then this argues strongly for its significance and impact on the dramatic environment at the time.

Miller's exclusion may also be because *Holland's Leaguer* is often considered a bad play by modern scholars - Jean E. Howard refers to it 'a wretched piece of playmaking', although Astington is more balanced, judging it to be a 'reasonably competent humours comedy, conventionally constructed, with a certain amount of clumsiness'.⁴¹⁰ Whatever the play's aesthetic and dramatic value might be considered to be, similarly to its subsequent fame, this has no bearing on its original place in theatrical innovations and popularity.

Objections may also be due to squeamishness about the setting being a brothel, and the sense that this is not as appropriate for a high-brow audience as the setting of a park or other fashionable town resort. However, this is not objective and imposes modern sensibilities on the past. The historical Holland's Leaguer was a high-class, moat-protected brothel that was frequented by the gentry, and demonstrably ought to be conceptually grouped with other spaces of upper-class leisure such as the pleasure parks and gardens featured in the other plays. Adam Zucker's analysis of the growth in elite London spaces which sought to appear free of the necessity of labour reflects on the significance of Covent Garden's architectural structure with 'its balconies and windows facing inwards, toward the presumably placid walks of a square and away from the reticulated hive of streets and alleyways growing around it, the Covent Garden piazza tried to turn its back on work'.⁴¹¹ Insularity and a projected detachment from the outside world could hardly be more clearly expressed by the moat, portcullis and infamous drawbridge with which Holland's Leaguer defended and isolated itself. The London parks and gardens forged a space between the sophistication of the city and the natural aspects of the country to create a cultivated but leisured fashionable resort in the Town. Indeed, there is a knowing symmetry between the settings of the plays and the location of the two playhouses which appear to have participated in the trend for place-realist plays: Salisbury Court and the Cockpit/ Phoenix were also leisure resorts for the relatively well-off, and were the only playhouses which were themselves situated in the Town.

Although Holland's Leaguer may have been an inversion of this ideal of an edenic microcosm within the metropolis, it operates as part of the same tradition, and its gardens, bowers, and enactments of courtship are shown by a woodcut in Nicholas Goodman's pamphlet on the

⁴¹⁰ *Theater of a City: the Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), p.160; *Actors and Acting in Shakespeare's Time: The Art of Stage Playing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.146.

⁴¹¹ 'Laborless London: Comic Form and the Space of the Town in Caroline Covent Garden', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 5.2 (2005), p.97.

brothel. Goodman's hysterically condemnatory yet titillating pamphlet recapitulates the sense that Holland's Leaguer existed as an idolised world shut off from the realities of urban London: Mistress Holland is alleged to have been born in 'the Kingdome of Eutopia', while the women who work there are 'the wicked Women of Eutopia'.⁴¹² Indeed, published the year after the first performance of Marmion's play, the pamphlet may have been attempting to capitalise on the success of the theatrical production as well as the notoriety of the brothel itself, which had just been raided and shut down.



Figure 9. Woodcut from Nicholas Goodman's *Hollands leaguer: or, An historical discourse of the life and actions of Dona Britanica Hollandia the arch-mistris of the wicked women of Eutopia*, (London: Augustine Mathewes for Richard Barnes, 1632)

It is true that the brothel was on the Bankside rather than in the Town, but this topographical distinction may only demonstrate that Holland's Leaguer was *explicitly* a place for the sexual liaisons of the gentry, while the parks and leisure resorts of the Town were ostensibly respectable but implicitly places of sexual liaison. Indeed, they are frequently satirised as such in the plays that represent them. Moreover, it is apparent that while brothels were more prevalent in Liberties and deprived areas such as the Bankside, Clerkenwell and Shoreditch,

⁴¹² *Hollands leaguer: or, An historical discourse of the life and actions of Dona Britanica Hollandia the arch-mistris of the wicked women of Eutopia* (London: Augustine Mathewes for Richard Barnes, 1632), sig. A4^r; sig. A3^r.

neither were they absent from the more affluent and increasingly fashionable areas. Although mapping the late 1570s, Ian Archer's diagram of bawdy houses in London suggests that at this point there were around eight in the area that came to be known as the Town.⁴¹³ Clearly this had not changed entirely by the 1630s: *The Weeding of Covent Garden* demonstrates anxiety about brothels in the square, and the titular 'weeding' refers to ejecting the sex trade and the roaring boys it attracted from the area.

Furthermore, there was some conceptual grey area between the sex trade as it took place in brothels, and sexual liaisons with gentlewomen which were figured as mercantile transactions. The language distinguishing the two concepts becomes especially blurred in *Tottenham Court*, which repeatedly presents its namesake as a place of sexual transgression. When Cicely attempts to dupe George into thinking she will become his mistress, she speaks about the exchange in solely mercantile language, stating that '[a] price is likewise set upon the ware [her virginity]; The time and place of enterchange [sic] appointed'.⁴¹⁴ The human aspect is completely removed: she does not mention herself or her would-be lover George by either name or pronoun. Virginity is explicitly a commodity – 'the ware' – and sex is an 'interchange'. While Cicely's framing of the 'trade' is complicated because she does not intend to go through with it, George refers to the assignation in similar terms. He refers to the trunk filled with feathers/ Cicely as '[a] light commodity I bought at Tottenham Court' (p.59). He simultaneously puns on the light weight of feathers and Cicely's assumed sexual lightness, refers to women's sexual favours as a commodity, and most importantly connects these concepts with Tottenham Court specifically. Tottenham Court is figured as a place whereby such commodities are cheaply and easily available to buy. Finally, the tapster of the inn where the assignation is to take place refers to the trunk scheme as 'a Tottenham-Court project translated over the water from Holland' (p.48). This explicitly connects the spatial identity of Tottenham Court with Holland's Leaguer, and while the brothel is figured as the originator and exporter of prostitution, it emphasises the similarity between the places and suggests that Tottenham Court and its reputation is derivative of that of the luxury brothel. Nevertheless, Tottenham Court has achieved independence in its reputation for illicit sexual liaisons – it is, after all 'a Tottenham-Court project' no matter where it originated from.

Based on this analysis, it is clear that the brothel Holland's Leaguer was not conceptually dissimilar enough to warrant being separated from other high-class leisure resorts in the early modern mind-set, and that this is demonstrated by playwrights referring to the illicit sexual activities associated with the other areas. It would therefore be anachronistic to exclude

⁴¹³ *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.212.

⁴¹⁴ Thomas Nabbes, *Tottenham Court. A Pleasant Comedie: Acted in the Yeare MDCXXXIII. At the private House in Salisbury-Court* (London: Richard Oulton for Charles Greene, 1638), p.45.

Holland's Leaguer from the place-realist sub-genre due to an assumption that its setting was a different 'kind' of place. I argue that Miller's decision to exclude *Holland's Leaguer* is arbitrary, and suggest that it ought to be considered in the same tradition. In this respect I follow Miles in positioning *Holland's Leaguer* at the inception of the place-realist sub-genre when it was first performed at Salisbury Court in 1631.

Perkinson, Miles and Miller all view place realist drama (or at least, the period which occurred in the 1630s) as concluding with *The Sparagus Garden* in 1635. Indeed, Miller argues that the play was directly responsible for the genre's cessation, as its 'devastating mockery of the idealism and optimism of the four previous plays brings this brief Caroline tradition to a halt'.⁴¹⁵ But while none of these critics make reference to it, Brome's *The New Academy, or the New Exchange* was also performed at Salisbury Court after *The Sparagus Garden*: although its performance date has been uncertain, Munro has shown that its use of quotation from *The Book of Bulls*, entered into the Stationer's Register on the 6 April 1636, pinpoints its date as 1636.⁴¹⁶ While at first the play's engagement with place does not seem particularly apparent, on closer inspection it fits the same criteria for inclusion as the other plays. Steggle provides a convincing defence of *The New Academy*'s importance as an example of place realism, demonstrating the easily overlooked fact that Rafe and Hannah Camelion's shop is on the New Exchange, and thus several scenes take place there.⁴¹⁷ Steggle demonstrates that the second clause of the play's title is not arbitrarily added to capitalise on the place realism fad as suggested by R. J. Kaufmann: although the New Academy is imaginary, the New Exchange is not, and 'in many ways the New Academy satirized in the play *is* the New Exchange'.⁴¹⁸ Situated in the Town, the shopping centre called the New Exchange was built by Robert Cecil in 1608-9, although it was not particularly prosperous until the 1620s when the westward expansion of London began to work in its favour. In the 1630s, it was becoming one of the most prosperous and fashionable shopping areas in London.⁴¹⁹

As a newly fashionable shopping destination selling luxury goods in the Town, the New Exchange is exactly typical of a location in a topographical comedy. The construction of the New Exchange was key to the development of the metropolitan London outside the City walls which, along with the rebuilding of the West End, led to the idea of a fashionable 'London season'.⁴²⁰ Moreover, it was a setting where different social classes could mix, and had a reputation for sexual intrigues of young members of the gentry with female shopkeepers, who

⁴¹⁵ 'The Historical Moment', p.352.

⁴¹⁶ Munro, Lucy, 'Richard Brome and The Book of Bulls', *Ben Jonson Journal*, 13.1 (2006), pp.125-138.

⁴¹⁷ *Richard Brome*, pp.90-100.

⁴¹⁸ *Richard Brome*, p.90.

⁴¹⁹ Steggle, *Richard Brome*, p.91.

⁴²⁰ Chris R. Kyle, 'Afterword: Remapping London', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 71.1, (2008), p.244.

‘became almost as attractive as the goods they sold, almost as deliberately marketed to entice customers, and almost as purchasable’.⁴²¹

Steggle’s evidence for the satirical treatment of the New Exchange setting in *The New Academy* demonstrate that it must be included in considerations of place realist drama, but he also usefully highlights how blurry the edges of this categorisation are. Speaking about Brome specifically, Steggle notes that he uses ‘the characteristic techniques of place-realism to set scenes in specific London palace rooms, taverns, streets, and locations’ throughout his city comedies, and that his interest in place extends far beyond that, demonstrating an awareness of the wider country’s geographic construction in *The Witches of Lancashire*, *The Queen’s Exchange*, and *A Jovial Crew*, and demonstrating in *The Antipodes* how the idea of a fictitious continent can be ‘created, sustained and contested’.⁴²² This serves as a reminder of the caution with which definitive generic distinctions ought to be used, but also demonstrates the impact the trend had on ongoing dramatic production. In establishing something approximating a canon of place-realist plays from the 1630s I am aware of the inherently problematic nature of such an exercise, but also suggest this should, if anything, serve as a prompt towards inclusivity and a broad approach rather than division and exclusion. As such, I would suggest all seven plays listed above ought to be considered as part of the same trend, albeit one that had its dramatic ancestors and whose impact and stylistic features can also be seen in other dramas produced around the same time.

Salisbury Court as the leading venue for place realist drama

Having established a repertory of seven plays which are clearly in the place realist trend, the playhouses that they were performed in present a clear pattern. *Hyde Park* and *Covent Garden* both premiered at The Cockpit/ Phoenix, and *Holland’s Leaguer*, *Totenham Court*, *The Sparagus Garden* and *The New Academy* were all performed at Salisbury Court. It is not certain where Brome’s *The Weeding of Covent Garden* was performed, but it is extremely unlikely to have been the Cockpit/ Phoenix, which staged Nabbes’ *Covent Garden* shortly afterwards. On that basis, it is usually suggested that the play was performed at the Blackfriars or at Salisbury Court. Bentley and Steggle both conclude that the play was probably performed by Prince Charles’ Men.⁴²³ The dates when Prince Charles’ Men were occupying Salisbury Court are not entirely clear, but Bentley proves that they were playing there by December 1631 and had left by July

⁴²¹ Steggle, *Richard Brome*, p.93.

⁴²² *Richard Brome*, p.9.

⁴²³ *Richard Brome*, p.44.

1634.⁴²⁴ Thus, although it is not certain, it is likely that *The Weeding of Covent Garden* was performed at Salisbury Court while Prince Charles' Men occupied it.

Thus, of the seven plays in the sub-genre, four or possibly five were performed at Salisbury Court and two at the Cockpit/ Phoenix. The numbers strongly indicate that Salisbury Court was the driving force of topographical comedy in 1630s, and as such prompted a resurgence of and new developments in the dramatic form. Furthermore, the playhouse seems to have initiated the trend: *Holland's Leaguer* was the first in the sub-genre, and was performed at Salisbury Court when it was still a newly constructed venue. The playhouse had been in operation for a year or two, but had just been occupied by the newly assembled company Prince Charles' Men (II), who replaced The King's Revels. In contrast, the Cockpit/Phoenix had been operating for seventeen or eighteen years under Christopher Beeston, with Queen Henrietta Maria's Men resident since 1625. As such, it likely that the impetus for change came from the less established playhouse and company, and Beeston responded to the competitor through imitation.

The New Academy was chronologically the last play, and Steggle demonstrates that it 'can be placed as the second of Brome's two plays written under the Salisbury Court contract, reaching the stage just before the substantial plague closure of 12 May 1636'.⁴²⁵ It was perhaps this plague closure that meant by the time the theatres reopened in October 1637, the sub-genre had lost momentum, or the topographical concerns of playwrights were being expressed in different ways – as in *The Antipodes* c.1640, which portrays an antithetical society to comment on England itself.⁴²⁶ As well broader social causes, the decline of place realism could have been influenced by changes at Salisbury Court. As the playhouse had been the prime progenitor of the trend, it seems possible that the venue's change of management and company in the late 1630s impacted on its development. Richard Heton had become manager during the plague closure of 1636-1637, and in 1639 'meant to secure a patent that would create a more dictatorial regime at Salisbury Court'.⁴²⁷ The company had also changed: Beeston had ejected Henrietta Maria's Men from the Cockpit/ Phoenix during the plague closure, and some of the members moved to Salisbury Court to form a new iteration of the company.⁴²⁸ This cessation of playhouse activity combined with the change of manager and company at the playhouse which had been primary site of its production suggest why the momentum of place realism was interrupted and it ceased to be a recognisable genre after 1636. These external changes are, I would argue, a much more plausible explanation for the

⁴²⁴ *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, I, p.304; p.307.

⁴²⁵ *Richard Brome*, p.70.

⁴²⁶ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.664.

⁴²⁷ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, p.664.

⁴²⁸ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, pp.632-633.

cessation of place realism than Miller's assertion that *The Sparagus Garden* put an end to the genre through its acerbic parody.⁴²⁹

However, just as the impact of place realism had not disappeared from English drama, Salisbury's Court's association with the genre would not have been erased. The reputation and style that it had established in its first years would continue to impact on the way early modern individuals conceptualised and thought about the playhouse. Moreover, while Salisbury Court developed the dramatic landscape through its role in the resurgence and development of place realism, this suggests more than an apolitical dramatological impact. More than simply intervening in theatrical trends and contributing to the idea of the playhouse's character, Salisbury Court's centrality to the production of topographical comedy suggests that it played a particularly active social and political role as place realism was an especially topically engaged, critical and even politically interventionist genre.

The political interventions of place realism

Critical perception of Caroline drama has changed dramatically – arguably undergoing a near complete reversal – since the publication of Butler's *Theatre and Crisis*.⁴³⁰ Before Butler, the prevailing narrative of Caroline drama considered it lacking in both artistic value and ideological integrity: often termed 'courtier' drama, the assumption was that the theatre was an overwhelmingly Royalist industry and thus produced sycophantic plays which pandered to Charles and Henrietta Maria. Since this work, the prevailing argument is for the political and social engagement of public theatre playwrights in the Caroline period. Sanders argues that the plays of Massinger, Ford, Shirley and Brome 'rarely represent escapist indulgences and are more often than not direct engagements with social, political and indeed theatrical realities in the moment in which they were produced'.⁴³¹

As part of this wider shift, place realist drama has been re-evaluated in terms of its political weight and the social implications of its use of topographical verisimilitude. Miles' assertions that 'the setting might be any generally appropriate place in London' and the 'photographic realism [...] seems to have been introduced for its intrinsic appeal, rather than its effectiveness as a setting' date from scholarship before Butler's invention.⁴³² Steggle has been demonstrative in countering these ideas, arguing against the idea that the action fails to integrate with the plays' locations, and their scholarly treatment as 'interesting in terms of social history, for their

⁴²⁹ 'The Historical Moment', p.370.

⁴³⁰ *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁴³¹ *Caroline Drama*, p.4.

⁴³² 'Place Realism', p.430; p.431.

documentation of a static backdrop as a by-product of their participation in a stylistic “fad”.⁴³³ Rather than viewing Brome’s place realist representations as inaccurate and gratuitous, Steggle suggests that the depiction of the locations is more accurate than has been supposed, but also that exact photographic verisimilitude is not the sole or primary objective.⁴³⁴ Rather, *The Weeding of Covent Garden* is overwhelmingly interested in ‘what the characteristic identity of this new development will become, and about what its administrative borders are [...] Brome is fascinated by the dynamic possibilities of space and place, and the ways in which geography can be contested and manipulated’.⁴³⁵

Further, Zucker’s work builds on Frederic Jameson’s theories that genre and form recapitulate ideology in order to demonstrate how the radical potential of Elizabethan and Jacobean city comedy was transmuted by playwrights in the 1630s, who used the existing signifiers encoded in the comic form to formulate a response to emerging social problems. As such, Zucker suggests the concerns of place in comedy were ‘put to use in Caroline England in ways that invoked those older interests [of Elizabethan and Jacobean comedy but] now looked to a new set of historically and topographically specific problems’, and that Shirley, Nabbes and Brome ‘took up older narrative paradigms of comedy to create a locationally specific kind of play that would influence the theater’s urban perspective for years to come’.⁴³⁶ Steggle similarly argues that the comedies are less formally innovative than accounts usually suggest, but instead ‘what develops in the 1630s is a growing interest in using such place-realism to offer commentary on national politics’.⁴³⁷

Miller agrees that the plays are engaged with and attempting to influence social and public opinion, and deeply embedded in the changing culture and macro political problems of the time. He takes a New Historicist approach which he describes as following in the tradition of Louis Montrose rather than Stephen Greenblatt: that is, viewing theatre and the place realist tradition as enabling social contestation and change rather than only as a tool of orthodoxy and containment.⁴³⁸ As such, he suggests that the settings are all chosen carefully as places where class conflict could occur because new urban spaces such as parks and piazzas do not have a strong cultural sense that they belong to one class (unlike the city, which was associated with citizens, or the country, associated with the gentry).⁴³⁹ However, Miller differs from Steggle in that he considers place realist plays inherently optimistic rather than anxious, and

⁴³³ ‘Placing Caroline politics on the professional comic stage’, in *The 1630s: Interdisciplinary Essays on Culture and Politics in the Caroline Era*, ed. by Ian Atherton and Julie Sanders (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p.156.

⁴³⁴ *Richard Brome*, pp.8-9.

⁴³⁵ *Richard Brome*, p.9.

⁴³⁶ ‘Laborless London’, p.96.

⁴³⁷ ‘Placing Caroline Politics’, p.156.

⁴³⁸ ‘The Historical Moment’, p.348.

⁴³⁹ ‘The Historical Moment’, p.351.

working as an educative tool which sought to find solutions and show compromise between classes rather than the vindictive victory of one class over the other, at least until the ‘nation’s belief in the power and benevolence of King Charles’s court began to wane’.⁴⁴⁰ At which point he views Brome as despairing of the social progress he had recently deemed possible, and writing *The Sparagus Garden* as a devastating satire of the sub-genre, which was so blistering that it made it impossible for any other writers to attempt another topographical comedy: it symbolised, Miller argues, the ‘rapid fading of the hopes and dreams which seem to have inspired the Caroline revival of topographical setting in the first place’.⁴⁴¹ However, as has already been shown, it is not the case *The Sparagus Garden* did bring the place realist trend to an end, as it was followed by *The New Academy* a year later in 1636, as well as the existence of numerous other plays until the outbreak of war which displayed an interest in place or developed on aspects of place realist writing. Miller also suggests that ‘pleasant settings, associated with the increasing economic power and rapid growth of London, or with the largess of King Charles’s early years as king, must in themselves have been conducive to optimism and belief in social progress, but it is apparent from the playwrights’ treatments of these ‘pleasant settings’ that there was the potential for deep ambivalence, anxiety or hostility towards these new spaces’.⁴⁴²

The cynicism of *The Sparagus Garden* is acknowledged by Miller himself, and indeed the eponymous pleasure garden is represented in the play as a cut-throat and potentially dangerous resort that is full of cynical, worldly people, and is associated mainly with illicit sexuality and deception. Sir Hugh Moneylacks, an impoverished gentleman, acts as a ‘gather-guest’ for Martha and the Gardener, the couple who own the garden and extort excessive reckonings from their customers.⁴⁴³ He dupes Tim Hoyden, a country yeoman who wants to become a gentleman, into believing that he must let out all of his father’s base blood and replace it with gentleman’s blood by eating delicate, expensive foods – beginning with asparagus. After his blood has been let out he must eat ‘meats and drinks of a costly price’ and then at his first ‘going abroad the first air you take shall be of the Asparagus Garden, and you shall feed plentifully of that’ (sig. D3^v). This deception serves the dual purpose of gathering custom for his employers and providing malicious enjoyment from spending Hoyden’s money while inflicting unpleasant experiences on him. He also convinces Rebecca Brittleware, who is desperate to become pregnant, that she will be able to do so if she eats asparagus. Moneylacks claims that ‘[o]f all the plants, herbs, roots, or fruits that grow it is the most provocative, operative and effective’ (sig. C4^v) and that ‘[a]ll your best (especially your modern) herbalists

⁴⁴⁰ ‘The Historical Moment’, p.351.

⁴⁴¹ ‘The Historical Moment’, p.370.

⁴⁴² ‘The Historical Moment’, p.351.

⁴⁴³ Richard Brome, *The Sparagus Garden: A Comedie. Acted in the year 1635. by the then Company of Revels, at Salisbury Court* (London: J. Okes for Francis Constable, 1640), sig. B4^v.

conclude, that your asparagus is the only sweet stirrer that the earth send forth (sig. C4^v-D1^r). While it is sometimes believed asparagus was considered an aphrodisiac, Leroy L. Panek demonstrates that this is a deception of a similar calibre and obviousness to the lie told to Tim Hoyden. Panek shows that in Dodonaeus and other popular herbals of the period, asparagus is considered a diuretic, but that the long list of other, supposedly less effective substances which Moneylacks later mentions are indeed listed as aphrodisiacs.⁴⁴⁴

Furthermore, when Martha and the Gardener discuss their clientele it is clear not only that they are charging extortionate prices, but that they are almost overtly acting as a place for illicit sexual liaisons:

Gardener: What did the rich old merchant spend upon the poor young gentleman's wife in the yellow bedchamber?
 Martha: But eight and twenty shillings, and kept the room almost two hours. I had no more of him.
 Gardener: And what of the knight with the broken citizen's wife that goes so lady-like in the blue bedchamber?
 Gardener: Almost four pound.
 (sig. E4^r)

When they are met with protests about the bill they reply that the reckoning is not itemised but charged collectively as it is in the Netherlands (sig. E4^v). This connection to the Netherlands further demonstrates the way Brome links the pleasure garden to the sex trade: it is no coincidence that Martha is Dutch; it is clearly designed to highlight the similarities between her and Mistress Holland.

This connection is made fully explicit when the Gardener says that he 'had once a hope to have bought this manor of marshland for the resemblance it has to the Low Country soil you came from – to ha'made you a Bankside lady' (sig. E4^r). Clearly, he is referring to Holland's Leaguer – the former manor house on the bankside owned by a Mistress Holland. By 1635, the brothel had been closed down, which is why this was a past aspiration. But it is still seems to be their intention to leave the asparagus garden and open a brothel when they have the money: 'two or three years toil more while our trade is in request and fashion will make us purchasers' (sig. E4^r).

It is apparent, then, that pleasant new urban spaces did not create a sense of optimism in everyone, and certainly not in Brome. Indeed, it is not only the Sparagus Garden location that is represented as a space with problematic connotations: both *The Weeding of Covent Garden* (1632) and *Covent Garden* (1633) are written in response to the eponymous piazza, which was by no means an uncontroversial new development, and both plays demonstrate in different ways anxieties about the space, its role and reason for existing in early modern London, and

⁴⁴⁴ 'Asparagus and Brome's "The Sparagus Garden"', *Modern Philology*, 68.4 (1971), p.362.

what it would develop into. Covent Garden is another pleasant new setting linked to London's rapid growth which seems to have prompted anxiety and satire due to its potential for sexual looseness or prostitution. The titular 'weeding' of Brome's play refers specifically to ejecting inappropriate people such as brothel owners and workers, and gangs of young gallants such as 'the Brothers of the Blade' from the area. In Nabbes' play when Mistress Tongall (whose name implies verbal and sexual looseness) claims she is 'a patient bearer', the servant Ralph replies that it is '[n]ot unlikely, I have heard there are many such in *Covent-Garden*'.⁴⁴⁵ Indeed, Ralph is newly arrived in London from the country, so not only is Covent Garden famous for its licentiousness in the metropolis, but the implication is either that its reputation had already reached around the country, or that it is one of the first things that newcomers would be likely to be told on coming to London.

In addition to being considered a site of sexual impropriety, Covent Garden was associated with other controversies. In July 1615 James I had issued a proclamation stating 'it is more then time that there be an utter cessation of further New-buildings, lest the surcharge and overflow of people doe bring upon Our said Citie infinite inconveniences'.⁴⁴⁶ Both James and Charles had followed with similar proclamations restricting the erection of buildings on new foundations to try to curtail the city's seemingly exponential growth in population – from 60,000 in 1500 to 200,000 in 1600 and 375,000 by 1650 – and the associated problems and poverty.⁴⁴⁷ Yet Charles granted – or sold – a license to the Earl of Bedford in February 1631 allowing him to undertake the Covent Garden developments, despite its being contrary to his father's and his own royal proclamations. It is well established that Charles prompted derision and even anger through his inventive methods of gaining capital during his Personal Rule, and this was no exception. The King raising money by fining those who disobeyed his edicts, or actively allowing them to be contravened if the price was high enough, was a topic ripe for satire, and the Earl of Bedford paid the enormous sum of £2000 twice for the right to develop his land into the Covent Garden piazza and surrounding area.⁴⁴⁸

Thus the very existence of the square itself, and the playwrights' decision to write a play based there, must have evoked the controversial origins of the development, and the King's willingness to contradict himself and allow developments he had already declared against the capital's best interests for financial gain. But even if the plays' attitudes towards their urban spaces are universally hostile, they always show a nuanced engagement with the rapidly changing topography of the city, and moreover with the social and political – as well as

⁴⁴⁵ Thomas Nabbes, *Covent Garden: A Pleasant Comedie: Acted in the Yeare MDCXXXII. By the Queenes Majesties Servants* (London: Richard Oulton for Charles Greene, 1638), p.5.

⁴⁴⁶ James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, eds., *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1973), no. 152, 16 July 1615.

⁴⁴⁷ Kyle, 'Remapping London', pp.243-244.

⁴⁴⁸ Zucker, p.99.

physical – surroundings. Clearly, place realism provided the opportunity to debate and reference political and social developments. Steggle notes that just as ‘place-realism provides Brome with a way of talking about royal politics without talking directly about the king’, a ‘similar sleight-of-hand permits Shakerley Marmion to talk in Holland’s Leaguer about the wars in Holland without direct reference to any monarch’.⁴⁴⁹ The very topographical and architectural associations of the brothel suggest this link: not only was Holland’s Leaguer a moated fortress, but it was further detached geographically and ideologically from the City by being situated in the Southwark liberties on the south bank of the Thames. As Steggle notes, its ideas around ‘establishing a private space within the orbit of the city [...] are often framed [...] within the language of republicanism associated with the Netherlands.’⁴⁵⁰ The pun on Elizabeth Holland’s surname makes the link with Holland, the wars there, and its systems of government all but explicit.

As such, place realism facilitated playwrights’ commentary on macro and micro political matters, and attempted to influence the attitudes and behaviours of their audiences. These representations of politics and London society are particularly incisive because of their verisimilitude, and because they would have evoked the complex connotations of real London areas, roads, buildings, and even rooms for the original audience. While the levels of engagement with the locations vary across topographical comedies, the work that the settings perform to create meaning has been underestimated. By utilising place realism in drama, playwrights drew on a complex web of associations that would have been known and understood by their audience of early modern Londoners. As ‘theatre relies on the contemporary situation for its material and fabric, however transformed in practice that material might appear’, place realist plays in the 1630s utilised a highly operating system of signs to prompt meanings for a knowledgeable audience, much of which is lost without the careful reassembling of these geographic nodes.⁴⁵¹ Moreover, Salisbury Court’s role in prompting this development of dramatic genre suggests that the playhouse had an important impact on political engagement in the theatre, and was an active force in the social engagement of 1630s drama.

⁴⁴⁹ ‘Placing Caroline Politics’, p.160.

⁴⁵⁰ ‘Placing Caroline Politics’, p.161.

⁴⁵¹ Sanders, *Caroline Drama*, p.68.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued against the notion of Salisbury Court as an inferior derivative of the second Blackfriars and the Cockpit/Phoenix, and it being considered a transitional space between Jacobean and Restoration periods. It has critiqued the spatial homogenisation of public indoor playhouses, highlighting the aesthetic differences which would have been prompted by their different architectural origins of a barn, a cockpit and the Parliament chamber of a monastery, and suggested that thus Salisbury Court must be considered as an individual entity with a unique identity. I have suggested that one dimension of the playhouse's reputation would have derived from its role as an innovative force behind the reiteration and development of the place realist genre in the early 1630s, and that further, the political engagement of this style of drama demonstrates the social impact that Salisbury Court had.

The chapter has also proposed that a key reason for Salisbury Court's low status in the canonisation of early modern playhouses has been its faulty conceptualisation as a Caroline playhouse. Aside from evoking common scholarly notions of decadent and artistically inferior drama, and a decline from the dramatic achievements of previous eras, this terminology also overlooks the playhouse's extensive history after Charles I's reign. By considering playhouse activity only within a canonised date range, Salisbury Court is considered to be from a different era to the Gibbons' Tennis Court, the playhouse considered in the next case study, despite the fact that there are records of performances there after Gibbons' life as a playhouse is conventionally considered to have ended.

Chapter 5

Gibbons' Tennis Court

This chapter is a case study of Gibbons' Tennis Court playhouse, which seeks to re-position it as important in the development of English theatre. I will suggest that a binary has been created between Gibbons' and Lisle's Tennis Court, which has led to it being inaccurately considered 'transitional' and 'Elizabethan' while Lisle's is thought to be innovative and inaugurating new Restoration trends. On the contrary, I will suggest that at the time they were both operating, Gibbons' reputation was probably superior, and that it was responsible for theatrical innovations such as the first performance of a newly written play and the first known professional performance by a female actor. Moreover, I will argue that the primary innovation associated with Lisle's – the use of changeable perspective scenery – is qualified by its use at other public playhouses beforehand.

This chapter will argue for the playhouse's importance due to the ongoing resonances of the theatrical heritage of the area: venues for theatre and entertainments have remained on the plot of land, while feminist productions nearby have celebrated the significance of the first woman on the Gibbons' stage.

1. Factual overview of Gibbons' Tennis Court

Gibbons' Tennis Court was built in 1633 by Charles Gibbon, and was located just off Vere Street by Clare Market, near Lincoln's Inn Fields. It was used as a tennis court before being used for surreptitious theatrical performances during the Commonwealth period. After the Restoration, it became the home of the King's Company, managed by Thomas Killigrew from November 1660 – May 1663, when they moved to a new theatre on Bridges Street.⁴⁵² After that it was used as a venue for prize fights and as a nursery theatre for young actors around 1669. Eventually, it became a tennis court again, before reputedly being destroyed by fire in 1809.

Like Salisbury Court, there are no contemporary images known to be of the interior of Gibbons' Tennis Court, and the foundations of the building no longer exist. As such, it is not possible to establish the size, layout or interior design of the playhouse with any degree of certainty. However, as the building was originally constructed as a tennis court, information can be established from similar constructions, and the interiors of real tennis courts, as usefully compiled by Edward Langhans in his article 'The Vere Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatres in Pictures'.⁴⁵³ The real tennis courts show that the shape of the auditorium would have been long and thin. *Londina illustrata* contains an image which has been thought to be the exterior of Gibbons' Tennis Court from 1811; it portrays the ruins of the building after it was destroyed by fire two years previously, and details the interior dimensions as 23 by 64 feet.⁴⁵⁴ However, both Hotson and Langhans query the accuracy of these dimensions, suggesting they are too small to be feasible.⁴⁵⁵ Doubts about the usefulness of Wilkinson's image are based on it being artistic rather than technical, that it was drawn two years after the event, and that it was incorrectly labelled as the Duke's theatre. Langhans suggests it may not be an authentic image, and Graham Barlow concludes that the image probably depicts a market house and certainly not Gibbons' Tennis Court.⁴⁵⁶

Nevertheless, Hotson and Langhans agree that the theatre, along with Lisle's Tennis Court, which housed the Duke's Company from 1663-1671, was tiny, estimating a capacity of around 400.⁴⁵⁷ In contradiction to this consensus, *Restoration and Georgian England, 1660-1788* asserts that the rationale for converting tennis courts rather than using the pre-war playhouses

⁴⁵² Pepys last saw a play at Gibbons' on 22 April 1662, and the new theatre on Bridges Street opened 7 May 1663 – see Hotson, p.249.

⁴⁵³ *Educational Theatre Journal*, 20.2 (1968), pp.171-185.

⁴⁵⁴ *Londina illustrata. Graphic and historic memorials of monasteries, churches, chapels, schools, charitable foundations, palaces, halls, courts, processions in the cities and suburbs of London & Westminster* (London: Robt. Wilkinson, 1819)

⁴⁵⁵ 'Commonwealth and Restoration Stage', p.119; 'The Vere Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatres', p.179.

⁴⁵⁶ 'Vere Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatres', p.178; 'Gibbons's Tennis Court: Hollar v. Wilkinson', *Theatre Research International*, 8.2 (1983), p.144.

⁴⁵⁷ *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.248; Langhans, 'The Post-1660 Theatres as Performance Spaces', in *A Companion to Restoration Drama*, ed. by Susan J. Owen (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p.3.

Salisbury Court and the Cockpit was to increase the seating capacity, although no reasoning for this is given.⁴⁵⁸ There are numerous possible rationales for using tennis courts rather than pre-war playhouses, including mimicking continental and aristocratic practices, the dilapidation of the former houses, and the desire for innovation.

The playhouse has been referred to in different ways, both during the period and in criticism since; late seventeenth century playhouses did not have distinct individual names as was usual earlier in the century. This was probably due to the reduction of theatrical venues and companies, which made it feasible to refer to the King's or Duke's company, or the road or area the playhouse abutted, without confusion. Langhans refers to it as 'the Vere Street Theatre' in his publications, due to its proximity to and probable entrance on that road, while Hotson concludes that 'Vere Street' is the most accurate topographical description but calls the playhouse 'Gibbons' Tennis Court', which highlights the origins of the building's purpose and ownership.⁴⁵⁹

In the seventeenth century, it was usually designated a variation of 'the King's House' or 'the theatre near Lincoln's Inn Fields', but these terms are confusing because 'the King's House' would refer to whichever venue the King's Company were playing at, which varied across time. Thus after 1663 'the King's House' would have referred to the Bridges Street Theatre until it burnt down in 1672, and then to the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane which was built on the same spot. Further, Lisle's Tennis Court theatre, the home of the Duke's Company from 1663-1674, was actually in Lincoln's Inn Fields, rather than on the periphery of it, as Gibbons' was. As such, Lisle's was more frequently referred to as the playhouse in Lincoln's Inn Fields, which can lead to confusion.⁴⁶⁰ In 53 out of the 63 instances in which he refers to the playhouse, Pepys refers to Gibbons' as 'the Theatre' – in contrast to Lisle's which he typically designates 'the Opera'. Of these ten deviations, most of them are when Gibbons' first opened, and Pepys refers to it as 'the new Theatre' or 'the new Playhouse'.

Clearly, it is not practical to refer to the playhouse by the early modern terms, and as such this chapter will use the designation 'Gibbons' Tennis Court theatre' throughout. Regrettably, some of the theatrical nuances are lost, but it has the advantage of being distinctive and unambiguous. The commonly used 'Vere Street theatre' is based on geographic proximity rather than any contemporary link, as early modern sources describe the venue as 'in Clare-Market'.⁴⁶¹ Moreover this designation would have been recognisable for early modern Londoners; in his first reference to the theatre, Pepys demonstrates his pre-existing knowledge of the space and its uses, calling it 'the new Play-house near Lincoln's-Inn-Fields (which was

⁴⁵⁸ Thomas, ed., p.54-55.

⁴⁵⁹ *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.120.

⁴⁶⁰ See Langhans, 'Vere Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatres'.

⁴⁶¹ John Downes, *Roscins Anglicanus, or an Historical Review of the Stage* (London: H. Playford, 1708), p.1.

formerly Gibbons' tennis-court)⁴⁶² Furthermore, it is useful to consider the ways in which the playhouse was architecturally distinctive: the fact that it was a tennis court was undoubtedly a distinguishing feature, and is revealing in regards to the continental and court influences which had been absorbed into English theatrical traditions in the civil wars and Commonwealth era. Relatedly, my wider project of creating links across traditionally separated time periods is assisted by remembering that it was Charles Gibbons who originally constructed the building in 1633, just four years after the construction of Salisbury Court began. Viewed in terms of the entire lifespans of the buildings, describing Salisbury Court from 1629-1666 and Gibbons' Tennis Court from 1633-1709 as theatres not only from different eras, but with an additional era in between, highlights the faulty logic at play in this conceptualisation.

The dramatic use of Gibbons' Tennis Court

The first recorded theatrical use of Gibbons' Tennis Court was in 1653, with a performance of Thomas Killigrew's *Claricilla*. This may have been in response to the probable wrecking of the Cockpit, Salisbury Court and Fortune stages in a 1649 raid: Hotson suggests that after this, illicit performances turned to the Red Bull, private residential houses and Gibbons' Tennis Court.⁴⁶³ This performance is known only because it was betrayed by someone: Hotson convincingly argues that the individual who reported this particular performance, described in the record as 'an ill Beest' was William Beeston, not only due to the apparent pun on his name, but because *Claricilla* had been the property of the Cockpit – and therefore Beeston – before the wars.⁴⁶⁴

Furthermore, a ballad on William Davenant's performance of *The First Day's Entertainment* at Rutland House in May 1656, claims 'I can tell y' of more of 's houses, one/ In fields of Lincolns Inne.'⁴⁶⁵ As Lisle's Tennis Court was not constructed until after this point, the house in question is almost certainly Gibbons' Tennis Court. As such, Davenant and Killigrew both had a Commonwealth history of performing at Gibbons'.

Tennis courts had long been associated with drama, and as well as influence from the French and Italian tradition of utilising tennis courts as dramatic venues, they had been used in English aristocratic estates for centuries.⁴⁶⁶ As tennis courts are designed to be places of sport and leisure they could be considered ideologically suspect, as demonstrated by a petition to Cromwell against Charles Gibbon building another court, which is perhaps reminiscent of the

⁴⁶² 20 November 1660.

⁴⁶³ *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.148.

⁴⁶⁴ *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.50.

⁴⁶⁵ C.J., B.J., L.M. and W.T., *Sportive Wit: The Muses Merriment* (London: Nath. Brook, 1656), cited in Hotson, *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.146

⁴⁶⁶ Hotson, *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.115.

famous petition by Blackfriars residents against Richard Burbage being able to convert the Upper Frater into a playhouse in 1596.⁴⁶⁷ John Tilson complained in 1653 that:

The said Gibbons is now erecting one other house and tennis court adjoining to the same place, to the further disturbance of his neighbours, and ill example of others in this time of reformation; whereas formerly no person was known to undertake any such building without special authority.⁴⁶⁸

Thus while it was mainly used for tennis, bowls and other forms of entertainment, Gibbons' Tennis Court did have a theatrical history before the King's Company started to occupy it in November 1660. For this reason it would be incorrect to view it entirely as a new, courtly, French influence which was imported along with the return of the monarchy. Its life as a theatre was not entirely a Restoration phenomenon as the foundations for its use had already been laid.

The King's Company began to perform their repertory of pre-war revivals at the playhouse, along with a handful of new plays towards the latter part of the company's tenure: *Selindra*, *Cornelia* and *The Surprisal*. When the King's Company left in May 1663 there are sporadic reports of dramatic use afterwards, including an actor training 'nursery' which set up there in 1669. The area has retained dramatic spatial associations to the present day. The site was labelled 'playhouse yard' on eighteenth century maps, and several theatres occupied the plot from 1911 onwards: the site is currently occupied by the Peacock Theatre.

⁴⁶⁷ Wickham, et al., *English Professional Theatre*, pp.501-502.

⁴⁶⁸ S.P. Dom., *Interregnum*, lxxvi, 56, cited in Hotson, *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.118.

2. Existing scholarship and position in theatre history narratives

Gibbons' Tennis Court has been chronically understudied, and often serves as little more than a footnote in theatre historiography. Hotson has produced the sole extended study of the playhouse in *The Restoration and Commonwealth Stage*, where he succeeds in establishing the playhouse's existence outside of the brief 1600-1663 era. Edward Langhans has written a useful article called 'The Vere Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatres in Pictures', in which he collates all the visual information about Gibbons' and Lisle's. In this he acknowledges that they are 'extremely important to the history of the English stage' and that 'it is astonishing how little we know about them and how seldom they have been studied in any detail'.⁴⁶⁹ In the 'Theatre in Europe: a documentary history' series, the edition on Restoration and Georgian England dedicates less than a page to both Gibbons' and Lisle's Tennis Court theatres.⁴⁷⁰ *The Cambridge Companion to Restoration Drama* mentions Gibbons' Tennis Court twice, both times in Langhans's chapter, and the exact same is true of *A Companion to Restoration Drama*.⁴⁷¹ Langhans is aware that the space devoted to Gibbons' and Lisle's 'in standard works on Restoration and 18th-century drama and theatre is woefully small', and indeed, he is generally the only contributor in collections to refer to them at greater length than a sentence.⁴⁷²

In this critical work, there is no mention of Gibbons' in terms of its repertory and the development of theatrical genre or style. Langhans refers to the tennis courts as 'transitional' playhouses, a problematic term which can only be made in retrospect and would not have appeared the case for Londoners at the time.⁴⁷³ Even after 1663, it is not clear that this is how Gibbons' would have been viewed, and as I will argue in the final section of this chapter, Gibbons' theatrical legacy continued long after the King's Company left. Elizabeth Pepys watched a play at Gibbons' in 1669 when it operated as a nursery for young actors: it does not make sense that she would have viewed the space as a transitional one which had already served its purpose in leading to another kind of theatre.

There is a sense in which the theatrical spaces can be said to have stabilised after the early years of the 1660s, during which there was more movement between spaces as the companies tried to establish the most advantageous practices and viable performance spaces possible. Nevertheless, in lived experience three years is a long time, especially in the rapidly changing political and social climate of the early 1660s. Generally in regards to the lifespan of a theatre company at an early modern playhouse, the King's Company's three year tenure at Gibbons'

⁴⁶⁹ *Educational Theatre Journal*, 20.2 (1968), p.171.

⁴⁷⁰ Thomas, ed., *Restoration and Georgian England 1660-1788*, pp.58-59.

⁴⁷¹ Susan J. Owen, ed., *A Companion to Restoration Drama* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001); Deborah Payne Fisk, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁴⁷² 'Vere Street in Pictures', p.171.

⁴⁷³ 'Vere Street in Pictures', p.171.

does not appear abnormally brief: there are shorter stints by pre-war companies at different playhouses, such as the Chamberlain's Men at the Curtain and the King's Revels and Prince Charles' Men at Salisbury Court. It highlights the faultiness of Langham's claim that the concept of 'transitional' space is also applied to Lisle's, which the Duke's Company operated at for eleven years. Lisle's conceptualisation as a 'transitional' space could only be in comparison to the Theatre Royal on Bridges Street (now Drury Lane) which has operated from 1663 to the present day – albeit in four different incarnations, the first of which also lasted for eleven years. But the subsequent longevity of theatre spaces can only have been known retrospectively. Indeed, the concept of a 'transitional' playhouse space appears to relate to my earlier discussion about the problems of conceiving canonised playing spaces at 'permanent', and excluding or marginalising those that are not.

Beyond the tennis courts being considered transitional generally, Gibbons' Tennis Court has been particularly neglected. Partly it is considered inferior to Lisle's on the basis that it was inhabited by one of the main companies for a shorter tenure. The King's Company's move to Bridges Street in 1663 is considered to be due to Lisle's popularity and innovations, and therefore Gibbons' comparative inadequacy.⁴⁷⁴ Lisle's is considered innovative as it is credited with being the first theatre to use perspective scenery, an important trend which developed in ways that are still apparent in some forms of English theatre. As I will discuss in more detail later, considering Lisle's as the 'first' to use scenes is undermined by the fact that perspective scenery had previously been used in public performances at other venues; the idea of Lisle's as the originator of perspective scenery stems from the problematic idea of 'permanence' which I have critiqued in Chapter 1.

Furthermore, the narrative of success for the Duke's Company at Lisle's and of failure narrative for Gibbons' and the King's Company is, I argue, anachronistically and problematically affected by the assumptions about Killigrew's financial and managerial incompetence, and even by the Duke's absorption of the King's Company to create the United Company, which happened decades later in 1682. As Phillip Major notes in his collection on Killigrew, since Hotson's negative portrayal of him in *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, Killigrew has been regarded as 'a failure: prone to devious share dealings; unable to manage star actors; slow to innovate; responsible for the eventual collapse of the King's Company'.⁴⁷⁵ It is apparent that judging a playhouse's success based on an event that happened to its inhabiting company twenty years in the future is deeply flawed.

While Lisle's is considered the originator of subsequent staging practices, Gibbons' Tennis Court has been considered traditional, conservative and backward-looking. Thomas

⁴⁷⁴ Nicholl, *A History of English Drama*, p.296-298.

⁴⁷⁵ Phillip Major, ed., *Thomas Killigrew and the Seventeenth Century Stage* (Routledge: Abingdon, 2016), p.64.

conceptualises it as a ‘compromise’ between the old and new types of theatre, suggesting that it was ‘probably similar in style to the Phoenix at Drury Lane but with improved seating capacity.’⁴⁷⁶ As far as I can see, there is no evidence for this comparison, or any reasoning why it was like the Cockpit/Phoenix specifically and not, say, Salisbury Court. This seems to suggest that ‘types’ and eras of playhouse are being homogenised and considered too broadly to be useful or accurate.

Meanwhile, features of theatrical production that could be considered innovative at Gibbons’ are overlooked: Hotson dismisses its employment of actresses, stating that ‘although Killigrew’s theatre in Gibbons’ was of the old Elizabethan style, — unadorned with scenery, — he embellished his troupe with the addition of six women actors’.⁴⁷⁷ Hotson dwells on the idea of the theatre as a throwback, referring to it as ‘the last of the Elizabethan kind’ and ‘fitted up [...] in the old Elizabethan style’.⁴⁷⁸ Conceptualising Gibbons’ as ‘Elizabethan’ is chronologically mangled and indicative of the problematic effects of historical periodisation, and how change is narrativised and historicised. The trend of referring to all theatre buildings, writings and practice before 1642 as ‘Elizabethan’ was a convention of scholarly writing that is now largely obsolete, but some remnants of the idea remain in the frequently Shakespeare-centric understanding of the origins of the English dramatic tradition. It can still be assumed that the last decade of the sixteenth and first decade of the seventeenth century were almost a sacred age for drama, which all previous theatrical practice led up to, and which all subsequently descended from. As such, plays from the Caroline and Jacobean eras can be tagged on as a footnote to the drama of Elizabeth’s reign. The label is chronologically illiterate from the other direction as well, as much of Elizabeth’s reign is *not* being referred to – for almost the first twenty years of her reign there is no evidence of playhouse structures with the sole purpose of dramatic performance, and indeed, the term does not always appear to refer to the mid part of her reign when playhouses such as the Curtain and Newington Butts were operating. By designating Gibbons’ Tennis Court an ‘Elizabethan’ playhouse, time is concertinaed to elide the tumultuous changes of over fifty years. This designation inevitably frames Gibbons’ Tennis Court as a conservative and backward-looking entity. This is contrast with Lisle’s, which is framed as the arbiter of new tastes and the place of progression towards new theatrical styles and aesthetics.

Moreover, the claim that Gibbons’ was ‘in the Elizabethan style’ homogenises the enormous differences between the venues that were used in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, which this thesis has previously established. There was no one ‘Elizabethan’ style, even among playhouses before 1603. Moreover, if there had been an archetypal Elizabethan

⁴⁷⁶ *Restoration and Georgian England*, p.54.

⁴⁷⁷ *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.242.

⁴⁷⁸ *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.119; p.206.

style, there is no extant information about the interior of Gibbons', making it impossible to ascertain whether it adhered to this. If, as Langhans suggests, the frontispiece to *The Wits* shows Gibbons', it was the first theatre known to utilise footlights, as well as several other interesting and distinct design features. However, the uncertainty of this attribution means this can only be speculative.⁴⁷⁹ Architecturally, Gibbons' was the first public theatre in a converted tennis court: Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline buildings converted into playhouses had included coaching inns, animal baiting arenas such as bearpits and cockpits, halls and barns.

Hotson's division of style splits the theatres into those without scenes and those with them; he states: '[a]s Gibbons' was the last of the old order, so Lisle's was the first of the new – the first regular theatre to use moveable scenery'.⁴⁸⁰ This paradigm constructs a binary between old and new theatres, which changes at a specific, definitive moment when all theatres adopted perspective scenery. While scenery was undoubtedly an extremely important development, positioning it as the singular significant alteration risks erasing other changes and variations in theatrical space and design. Moreover, Hotson's specification 'regular' theatre operates in the same way as 'permanent', excluding productions in playhouses that are excluded from the canon, or outside the limits of their canonised years of production: this glosses over the fact that Lisle's was not the first English playhouse to use perspective scenery, and creates a misleadingly clear division between the two tennis courts and the introduction of scenes.

It is necessary to complicate the notion of Lisle's as a singularly innovative space that was solely responsible for the introduction of scenery. There is some history of perspective scenery on the stage before Lisle's, and some Londoners could be acquainted with it in ways other than public theatre. John Evelyn notes a puppet theatre with perspective scenery while travelling in Italy in the 1650s, and continental scenery almost certainly influenced the development, especially as many theatre professionals, courtiers, and theatre-goers spent some time on the continent during the wars or Commonwealth. There was a long-established tradition of elaborate scenery being produced for court masques, with Inigo Jones being employed to design sets as early as *The Masque of Blackness* in 1605.⁴⁸¹ This was not restricted solely to the masque form, as the court performances of the play *Love's Mistress* appear to have used perspective scenery as well. In an address 'To the Reader' of a published edition of the play, Heywood praises

Mr Inigo Jones [...] Who to every Act, nay almost to every Sceane, by his excellent inventions, gave such an extraordinary [sic] Lustre; upon every occasion changing the stage, to the admiration of all the Spectators⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁹ 'Vere Street in Pictures', p.179.

⁴⁸⁰ *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p.120.

⁴⁸¹ John Newman, 'Jones, Inigo (1573-1652)', in *ODNB*, Oxford University Press (2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/15017>>

⁴⁸² *Loves Mistress* (London: John Raworth for John Crouch, 1640), sig. A3^r.

It is also possible that Thomas Nabbes' *Microcosmus*, staged in the mid-1630s at Salisbury Court, was the first use of changeable scenery in the English public theatre, as it 'almost certainly required elaborate painted scenery which could be changed behind a proscenium arch fitted with curtains'.⁴⁸³ Davenant's production of *The Siege of Rhodes* at Rutland House in 1656 certainly used perspective scenery. In the published version, Davenant's address to the reader laments that the production took place in a small room, as

[i]t has been often wisht that our Scenes (We having oblig'd our selves to the variety of Five changes) according to the Ancient Drammatick distinctions made for time) had not been confin'd to eleven foot in height, and about fifteen in depth⁴⁸⁴

This production has been considered in the private tradition because it was in Davenant's residence, but in accordance with my criticisms of playhouse canonisation, this is not sufficient grounds against it being considered in the public tradition. Rutland House was in Aldersgate Street within the City of London, and as such centrally located in the environs in which playhouses had previously clustered, but more importantly, because a fee was charged for admittance this means the production must rightly be defined as public.

Additionally, *The History of Sir Francis Drake* published in 1659 demonstrates that Davenant had also been using perspective scenery in public productions at least three or four years before Lisle's opened. The edition's title advertises these attractions to the reading public:

The history of Sr Francis Drake.: Exprest by Instrumentall and Vocall Musick, and by Art of Perspective in Scenes, &c. The First Part. Represented daily at the Cockpit in Drury-Lane, at Three Afternoon Punctually⁴⁸⁵

While the Cockpit is within the group of canonised playhouses, the years during which this is the case generally only extend until 1642. Its dramatic activity after this is not usually considered to count as part of the main narrative of English theatrical development. Part of the rationale for this exclusion is that performances between 1642 and 1660 were not entirely legal; as such, it is relevant that Davenant wrote the production with Cromwell's approval, for its value as anti-Spanish propaganda.⁴⁸⁶ This leads to another rationale for exclusion: the play was a hybrid of masque and drama so that it could receive official sanction. Nevertheless, this is a technicality: its performance for a paying public at the Cockpit – a long-established public playhouse, and one which had continued at least sporadically with performances of drama through the wars and Commonwealth – demonstrate its position in the tradition of public drama.

⁴⁸³ Bordinat, 'A Study of the Salisbury Court Theatre', p.iii.

⁴⁸⁴ *The Siege of Rhodes* (London: Henry Herringman, 1656), sig. A2^v-A3^r.

⁴⁸⁵ *The history of Sr Francis Drake* (London: Henry Herringman, 1659), sig. A1^v.

⁴⁸⁶ Clare, *Drama of the English Republic*, p.30.

The advertising function of the frontispiece makes clear that the production was open to the public: the information that it is performed 'daily' and 'at three afternoon punctually' enables the reader to watch the production after having read the script. Moreover if, as Stern has suggested, playbills resembled title pages, these attractions were probably also replicated on playbills used to advertise the production, especially since playbills particularly 'promoted novelty'.⁴⁸⁷ That the story is '[e]xprest by instrumentall and vocall musick, and by art of perspective in scenes, &c.' is undoubtedly partly designed to defend the production from accusations of illegal theatrical production: it implies that the story is told through musical and visual mediums rather than dramatic ones, but the ambiguous 'etc' simultaneously alludes to the acting and script - the other way that the story will be expressed. In addition, highlighting these aspects advertises the performance by appealing to the visual and aural elements which are not available in a play text. The frontispiece of the edition also includes an image of the scenery, which promotes the appealing visual development that the production offers.

As such, I argue that a clear fissure in the presence of scenery, which bisects Gibbons' and Lisle's, is over-determined because it ignores the use of scenes in public playhouses before Lisle's. Additionally, it is unclear whether nursery theatres and other unpatented or semi-patented companies in the 1660s consistently used scenes in their productions. Due to the more transient and less well documented nature of these enterprises there is not conclusive evidence, but I would suggest it is unlikely given the financial constraints on smaller companies and pragmatic difficulties of moving large properties and set given a higher level of insecurity in terms of location and venue. The paradigm may also neglect any incremental developments that were probably present at Gibbons': as Langhans notes, 'plays done by Killigrew at Vere Street suggest that even before he moved to more spacious quarters he, too, began using some scenic elements'.⁴⁸⁸ Langhans does not specify which plays he considers to be probable candidates for the inclusion of scenic elements, but the newly written *Selindra* certainly seems a strong candidate. The first act opens with the title 'The Scene Is the Emperours Palace at Bizantium', and is followed by the stage direction 'Philocles and Selindra sit within the Scene'.⁴⁸⁹ Both references suggest some degree of visual representation or differentiation of location on the stage, and a later stage direction makes clear that there were at the very least sizable props, when Philocles 'throws himself on the Couch sadly'.⁴⁹⁰

Lisle's, then, was not the first English playhouse to use perspective scenery: the examples I have given have both been from plays produced by Davenant, so it could be claimed that

⁴⁸⁷ *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.56-61; p.58.

⁴⁸⁸ 'Vere Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatres in Pictures', p.185.

⁴⁸⁹ William Killigrew, *Three playes* (London: T. Mabb; for John Playfere, 1665), sig. B1^r, sig. C4^v.

⁴⁹⁰ Killigrew, *Three playes*, sig. C5^v.

scenery was a trend that started with him, and therefore the Duke's Company. If Davenant was the driving force behind perspective scenery, it was not Lisle's itself that was the innovative space, but was the receptacle of Davenant's scenic developments. There is no doubt that perspective scenery was an influential development, and one which Killigrew employed at Bridges Street Theatre in 1663. However, it does not necessarily follow that this change from the King's Company was merely a responsive move because of its popularity at Lisle's: the warrant that Charles II granted to Killigrew and Davenant on 21 August 1660 implies in its wording that they *both* intended to use scenic theatres. Charles states that the prices must reflect what audiences are accustomed to, or at least 'be reasonable in regard of the great expenses of scenes, music, and such new decorations as have not been formerly used'.⁴⁹¹ Just as it is not correct to assume that the Curtain was merely a response to the Theatre, it is problematic to assume a direct causal relationship between the Duke's Company's use of perspective scenery and the King's Company starting to as well. In any case it is apparent that perspective scenery was intended from the start, and thus Davenant did not produce an unexpected coup when he opened Lisle's years later, particularly given his use of scenery in other venues in the 1650s.

Nevertheless, it does seem that the King's Company did not start using scenery straight away while at Gibbons' Tennis Court – at least not extensive perspective scenery, since it is unknown how their interior was arranged. This is because there is no mention of it, whereas it is a noted feature at Lisle's. The excitement around scenery was palpable, and it seems no coincidence that this coincides with Pepys observing the number of patrons who left Gibbons' for Lisle's when it first opened: 'strange to see this house, that used to be so thronged, now empty since the Opera begun; and so will continue for a while, I believe'.⁴⁹² Nevertheless, despite the novelty of Davenant's productions, it is not clear they were always considered to have included innovative developments for their own sake, but perhaps as a response to other failings by the company. Colley Cibber states that

the better Actors (which the King's seem to have been allow'd) could not fail of drawing the greater Audiences [therefore Davenant] was forc'd to add Spectacle and Musick to Action and to introduce a new Species of Plays⁴⁹³

Indeed, Pepys's viewing habits at least do not show a complete abandonment of Gibbons': in the period from when Lisle's opened until the King's Men left Gibbons' (June 1661 - May 1663) Pepys saw 30 productions at Lisle's and 34 at Gibbons'. With Pepys' patronage at least,

⁴⁹¹ BL Add.MS 19.256, f. 47, cited in Thomas, *Restoration and Georgian England*, p.12.

⁴⁹² 4 July 1661.

⁴⁹³ *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber, Comedian, and Late Patentee of the Theatre-Royal. With an Historical View of the Stage during his Own Time* (Dublin: Re-printed by and for George Faulkner, 1740), pp. 56-57.

both theatres were almost entirely equal, and this is despite the fact that he enjoyed the productions at Lisle's more frequently than at Gibbons'.

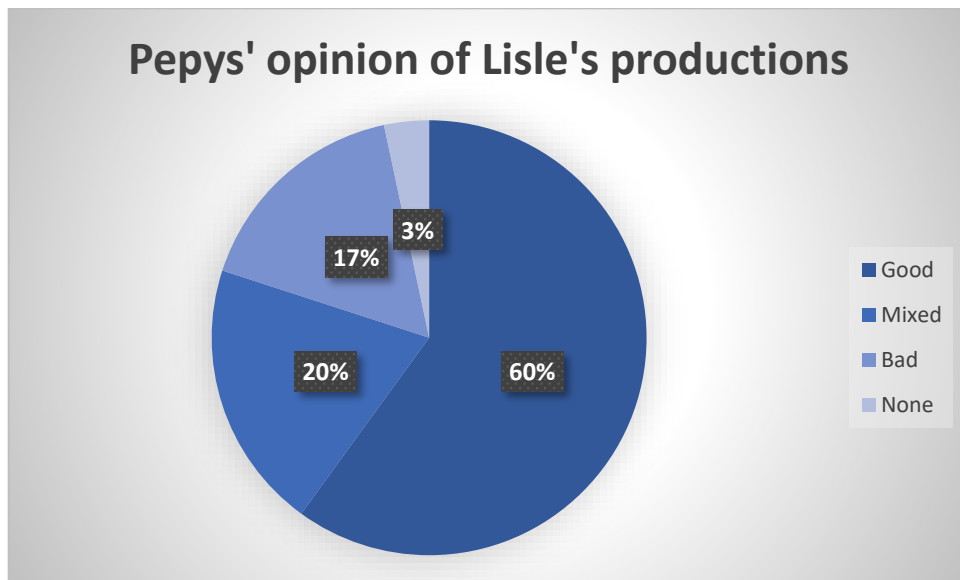


Figure 10. Pepys' opinion of Lisle's productions July 1661-April(?)1663.

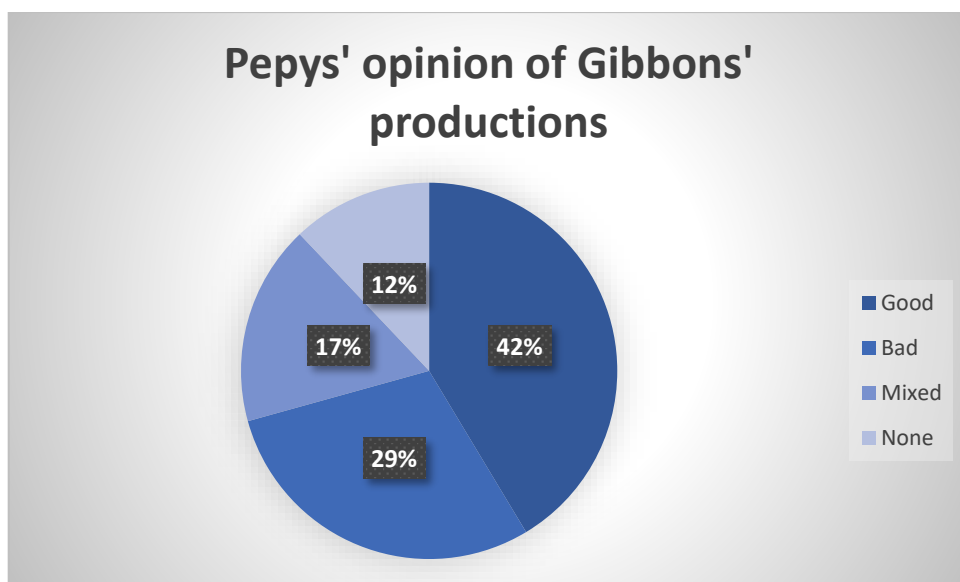


Figure 11. Pepys' opinion of Gibbons' productions from July 1661-April(?) 1663.

Nevertheless, scenery was probably not the prime attraction of theatregoing. Pepys' positive comments about Lisle's suggest Betterton's acting was more important than scenery; he mentions Betterton three times during this period and the scenery four, but Betterton acts 'to

admiration' and is 'the best actor in the world'.⁴⁹⁴ On the other hand, all mentions of scenery are in the first months after Lisle's had opened, and record a sense of novelty rather than wonder. On his first visit to the playhouse Pepys notes that 'the scene opened; which indeed is very fine and magnificent', and the next month he records the premiere of *The Wits* 'never acted yet with scenes'.⁴⁹⁵ He also notes the use of scenery in *Hamlet*, stating it was 'done with scenes very well, but above all, Betterton did the prince's part beyond imagination'.⁴⁹⁶ By October 1661 the Duke's Company have made 'some alteration of their scene, which do make it very much worse', after which Pepys neglects to mention the innovation again.⁴⁹⁷

While Pepys is only one individual and cannot be taken as representative of all opinions, his extensive playgoing makes these comparisons useful, particularly as he is frequently swayed by public opinion. For example, in one visit to Gibbons' he 'found so few people (which is strange, and the reason I did not know) that I went out again, and so to Salsbury [sic] Court, where the house as full as could be'.⁴⁹⁸ As Pepys was sensitive to following the fashionable and popular trends in theatre viewing, the possibility of these opinions being especially atypical seems unlikely.

As such, the notion that Gibbons' was old-fashioned, derivative and theatrically conservative while Lisle's was progressive and drove theatrical development needs to be qualified and complicated. I have suggested that this idea partly derives from the companies and their subsequent fortunes rather than the playhouses themselves: as the King's Company was incorporated into the Duke's Company to form the United Company in 1682, this failure can be problematically reincorporated to influence understandings of the companies' operations in the first years of the Restoration.

In addition to the use of scenery, it could be thought that this dichotomy is supported by the idea that Gibbons' performed old, traditional plays while Lisle's performed more progressive and newly written ones; the King's Company having 'the old actors'; Gibbons' being more inclined towards traditional staging and casting practices; and a sense that Lisle's was a more prepared and luxurious space as it had taken longer to construct. To consider the first point in detail, the next section of this chapter will analyse the repertories of the two theatres: the data suggests that there was little difference in the traditionalism of the two theatre's revival repertories between November 1660 and April 1663, and although Lisle's performed slightly more new plays this was partly due to necessity from their inferior allocation in the division of

⁴⁹⁴ 30 September 1662; 4 November 1661.

⁴⁹⁵ 2 July 1661; 15 August 1661.

⁴⁹⁶ 24 August 1661.

⁴⁹⁷ 21 October 1661.

⁴⁹⁸ 2 March 1661.

pre-war plays. Moreover, the significance of this is further qualified by Gibbons' presenting newly-written plays before Lisle's did.

It is true that the King's Company absorbed most of the old actors who had reformed as a group in the latter part of the Commonwealth. *Roscius Anglicanus* states that:

the scattered Remnant of several of these Houses, upon King *Charles's* Restoration, Fram'd a Company who Acted again at the Bull, and Built them a New House in *Gibbons' Tennis Court*, in *Clare-Market*, in which Two Places they continued Acting all 1660, 1661, 1662, and part of 1663⁴⁹⁹

The King's Company receiving the older actors probably shows that they held the stronger hand of the two patented companies, and thus were able to obtain Mohun – whom Pepys heard reputed 'the best actor in the world' – and Lacy, who was so popular that Charles II commissioned a triple portrait of him playing three different characters.⁵⁰⁰ Indeed, by the time *Historia Histrionica* was published in 1699, Lovewit, one of the dialogue's interlocutors, claims that the actors of the day are much inferior 'compared to Hart, Mohun, Burt, Lacy, Clun and Shatterel; for I can reach no farther backward'.⁵⁰¹ Nearly forty years later, the actors who were held up as examples of superior skill in the previous age were without exception members of the King's Company, and actors who played at Gibbons' Tennis Court rather than Lisle's. It is surprising, given his success, that Lisle's Betterton is not included in the list: this alone must act as compelling evidence of the importance of the actors at Gibbons'. A notable feature of *Historia Histrionica* is that it emphasises the value of English theatrical tradition and nostalgically idealises past actors, playwrights and practices as part of a golden age superior to its own. Having the older actors was probably a positive rather than a negative for Gibbons', and this is compounded by the King's Company receiving a superior repertory of pre-war plays. The allocation of the repertories will be discussed in greater detail later, but the same process appears to have taken place with the actors, and receiving the older, experienced company was a coup rather than evidence of an outdated outlook.

Probably the most frequently cited theatrical innovation in Restoration is the widespread introduction of professional actresses, and Gibbons' was in the vanguard of this development. The King's Men employed numerous actresses from 1660, with women's roles played by them and by male actors. The first production after the Restoration known to have a woman performing professionally was on 8 December 1660 at Gibbons', a few weeks after it had opened.⁵⁰² Langhans acknowledges that Gibbons' was the first theatre to employ actresses, but

⁴⁹⁹ Downes, sig. B1^r.

⁵⁰⁰ *Diary*, 20 November 1660; Julie Sanders, 'Lacy, John (c.1615–1681)', in *ODNB*, Oxford University Press (2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/15856>

⁵⁰¹ *Historia Histrionica*, p.2.

⁵⁰² Elizabeth Howe, *The first English actresses: Women and drama, 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.19.

the sense of it being a conservative venue is so strong that he considers this to be ironic rather than signalling innovation.⁵⁰³ Although actresses were popular, also using men to play women's roles does necessarily indicate a poor commercial decision or backward-looking mindset: Kynaston was famous for playing women and men, with Pepys describing him as 'the prettiest woman in the whole house [...] and then likewise did appear the handsomest man in the house'.⁵⁰⁴

Indeed, it is unclear whether the theatrical trend would have developed exactly as it did had it not been legislated for: Charles II's preferences decided the matter when he issued a degree stating that all female roles had to be performed by women in 1662.⁵⁰⁵ Moreover, the King's Company became extremely innovative in this sense shortly after vacating Gibbons', putting on an all-female production of *The Parson's Wedding* at Bridge's Street Theatre in 1664, and planning an intended all-female production of *Thomaso* which never transpired in the same year.⁵⁰⁶ The reasons for doing so were almost certainly financial rather than egalitarian, trading on the novelty of sexualising actresses and the titillation of displaying female legs in breeches but nevertheless this can hardly be considered a backward-looking move in theatrical or social terms. This is particularly the case since all-female productions of early modern plays are still rare, and are frequently met with reproof, mockery or overt hostility in reviews from some media outlets.⁵⁰⁷

While it took more time for the Duke's company to move to Lisle's the reason for this is not known, and does not necessarily suggest that it was more luxurious and better planned. There

⁵⁰³ 'The theatre', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.3.

⁵⁰⁴ 7 Jan 1661.

⁵⁰⁵ Howe, *The first English actresses*, p.xi.

⁵⁰⁶ Howe, *The first English actresses*, pp.57-58.

⁵⁰⁷ For example, see Charles Moore, 'I fear this director comes to bury Caesar', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 December 2012 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/charlesmoore/9733633/I-fear-this-director-comes-to-bury-Caesar.html>> [accessed 3 April 2016]; Charles Spencer, 'Julius Caesar, Donmar Warehouse, review', *Daily Telegraph*, 5 December 2012 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-reviews/9722122/Julius-Caesar-Donmar-Warehouse-review.html>> [accessed 7 April 2016]; Tim Walker, 'Julius Caesar, at Donmar Warehouse, review', *Daily Telegraph*, 14 December 2012 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-reviews/9746284/Julius-Caesar-at-Donmar-Warehouse-review.html>> [accessed 3 April 2016]. Even reviewers sympathetic to the concept of all-female casting demonstrate awareness of the potential for criticism of the concept: Paul Taylor describes the Donmar's *Julius Caesar* as 'a calculatedly provocative choice' of play, and that the strength of the cast is 'cocking a snook at the skeptics': Taylor, 'Julius Caesar, Donmar Warehouse, London', *Independent*, 5 December 2012, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/reviews/julius-caesar-donmar-warehouse-london-8385998.html>> [accessed 15 April 2012]. The Mission Statement of all-female Shakespeare company Smooth Faced Gentlemen is revealing about the hostilities towards the concept of their work: '[w]e use the single gender convention as a lens to cast a new light on these well know [sic] plays, challenging audiences to take a fresh look at Shakespeare's wonderful stories. As a company, we don't set out to promote any overt political message, feminist or otherwise. We do all want to see equality in the arts, but we believe the individual preconceptions surrounding our company says more about the state of gender equality today than any mission statement'. Smooth Faced Gentlemen, 'Our Mission', (2012) <<http://smoothfacedgentlemen.com/about/#mission>> [accessed 18 April 2016]

is nothing to prove Langhan's notion that Davenant took his time in order to construct his ideal theatre.⁵⁰⁸ It is not clear how or whether Lisle's was architecturally different to Gibbons', as presumably given their origins they were more or less the same interior size and shape. Pepys' first experience of Lisle's undermines any assumption that it had been three years in the making and therefore immaculately and luxuriously constructed. He notes that 'by the breaking of a board over our heads, we had a great deal of dust fell into the ladies' necks and the men's hair, which made good sport'.⁵⁰⁹

Finally, I suggest that it would be productive for criticism to not always consider Gibbons' and Lisle's Tennis Court theatres together, and as parallel to each other. This is the approach that has been necessary in this chapter, because the critical reputation of Gibbons' is currently impossible to detach from Lisle's. As such, to challenge the notion of them as equivalent entities, it has been necessary to weigh the evidence from both playhouses together. But as I have already argued, the range of theatrical playing spaces in the first years of the 1660s was more extensive than has been believed, and indeed, the two theatres' lives as the homes of the King's and Duke's Companies did not have a long period of overlap. To recreate a clearer sense of the unique identity of Gibbons' Tennis Court theatre, the next section will reconstruct and analyse the repertory which was performed there.

⁵⁰⁸ 'The theatre', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.3.

⁵⁰⁹ 2 July 1661.

3. Repertory at Gibbons' Tennis Court theatre

Establishing the repertory

This section will establish the repertory of plays which were performed at Gibbons' Tennis Court in order to examine narratives about the playhouse's traditionalism, as well as provide detailed evidence of practice in the playhouse, and what this can reveal about the space's individual reputation and identity. The repertory can be established extensively, and is comprehensive enough to enable statistical consideration. I have constructed a repertory of 68 plays which the King's Company are very likely to have played at Gibbons' by combining evidence from Henry Herbert's record book; *Roscius Anglicanus*, a historical document on the stage written in 1708 by the prompter John Downes, and Samuel Pepys' diary, in which he records 56 instances of watching plays there.

Herbert's record book contains a list of plays acted by the King's Company 1600-1662, which is labelled either by Herbert or Malone as 'a List of plays acted [...] by the kings company at the Red Bull [& Gibbons] and the new house in Gibbon's Tennis Ct near Clare market'.⁵¹⁰ Adams describes the list as designed 'to exact payment from the King's Company', and indeed, there are articles of agreement between Herbert and Killigrew in which Killigrew agrees to pay forty shillings per new play and twenty shillings per revived play.⁵¹¹ Thus this appears to be the list Herbert kept to ensure he received payment for the different titles performed, which is good reason to consider it fairly comprehensive. Almost all the plays in the repertory are included in Herbert's list, but Pepys saw two plays which are absent, and Downes records seven more. I have included these nine plays in the repertory as the balance of probabilities suggests they were performed at the venue: it seems very unlikely that Pepys would mistake the play he saw when writing about it the same day, and without motivation to alter the facts. Downes' plays are less certain to have been performed at Gibbons' as *Roscius Anglicanus* refers to the King's Company throughout its life, so some plays may have been introduced later while the company performed at Bridges Street. However, as the plays were available in 1660, it is not clear why the King's Company would have held certain plays back for years before performing them, and as Pepys demonstrates that Herbert's list was not entirely complete it is highly likely they were also performed.

The absence of these plays from Herbert's list may relate to the cost of performing each play for the King's Company; given the financial disputes between Herbert and Killigrew, it is feasible that Killigrew hid some productions to avoid paying for them.⁵¹² Alternatively, they could have been missed from Herbert's books for other reasons as while these records are

⁵¹⁰ Bawcutt, *Control and Censorship*, p.268.

⁵¹¹ *Dramatic Records*, p.116.

⁵¹² Adams, *Dramatic Records*, p.113.

quite reliable there are mistakes: some of the years of performance are clearly incorrect, and *Love lies a Bleeding* is recorded on 13 November 1660, and then *Philaster* (its alternate title) on 11 January 1662.⁵¹³ Thus, on balance, I include the plays which are only referred to by Downes in the Gibbons' repertory, although with less certainty than the rest.

The resulting repertory is recorded in Appendix 2, and as well showing which of the three sources demonstrate the play's presence in the repertory, it also includes the play's author, genre, date of first performance and original company. The latter data is taken from Martin Wiggins' *Catalogue of English Drama* for all plays recorded in the volumes published to date (i.e. up until 1623).⁵¹⁴ Plays from after 1616 which are not yet covered by Wiggins are taken from Harbage's *Annals of English Drama*.⁵¹⁵ In many cases, Harbage gives a possible date range and a 'best guess'; in these instances, I have used the best guess as the date of performance.

The division of revival plays between Gibbons' and Lisle's Tennis Court Theatres

While easier to establish than for many early modern playhouses, the repertory at Gibbons' is complicated to reflect on because it was not one which had come about gradually and cumulatively, but was constructed from pre-war plays originally performed by different companies in various venues. The evidence regarding how plays were divided between the King's and Duke's companies is piecemeal, and there are disagreements about why the two companies and managers obtained certain plays. Killigrew's company was formed of older actors who had been in the industry before the war, while Davenant's company consisted of younger actors who had not. As many of the old actors had been members of the King's Men, and were again under the monarch's patronage as the King's Company, it has been argued Killigrew's company at Gibbons' were considered the inheritors and heirs of the King's Men.⁵¹⁶ Although there is no definitive evidence that they were conceived of this way, it has also been claimed that this dramatic lineage was used by the King's Company 'to try to lay claim to exclusive performance rights to the works of [Jonson, Shakespeare and Fletcher]'.⁵¹⁷

The most compelling evidence of a perceived continuation of the old King's Men is the title of the grant of plays to the company in January 1669, which is titled 'A Catalogue of part of His Mat^{tes} Servants Playes as they were formerly acted at the Blackfryers & now allowed to His

⁵¹³ See Adams, *Dramatic Records*, p.118.

⁵¹⁴ Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama, 1533-1642: A Catalogue*. 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012-2016).

⁵¹⁵ *Annals of English Drama, 975-1700* (London: Methuen, 1964).

⁵¹⁶ Nicholl, 'The Rights of Beeston and D'Avenant in Elizabethan Plays', in *The Review of English Studies* 1:1 (1925), p.85; Michael Dobson, 'Adaptations and Revivals', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, ed. by Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.43.

⁵¹⁷ Dobson, 'Adaptations and Revivals', p.43.

Mates Servants at ye New Theatre'.⁵¹⁸ Gunnar Sorelius agrees that this mention of the Blackfriars leads to the 'generally accepted and highly plausible theory [...] that the King's Men claimed the rights in the plays of the old King's Men before the War'.⁵¹⁹ However, as Sorelius points out, it is also possible that rather than the actors' connection, it was Killigrew's favoured position with the King that allowed him to obtain what Michael Dobson considers the 'manifestly unfair division of the dramatic heritage'.⁵²⁰

Colley Cibber was the first to describe how the pre-war repertory was divided, and stated in his *Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber* that because the two companies had 'a private Rule or Agreement, which both Houses were happily ty'd down to, which was, that no Play acted at one House, should ever be attempted at the other' the best plays 'of *Shakespeare*, *Fletcher*, and *Ben Jonson*, were divided between them, by the Approbation of the Court, and their own alternate Choice'.⁵²¹ However, as Sorelius has noted, 'there is no reason to trust Cibber's evidence in this case; his autobiography was written almost eighty years after the event'.⁵²² Certainly, Charles' license to Killigrew and Davenant on 21 August 1660 does not mention that there would be a division of plays, and there are no other extant documents from the court which intervene on the matter. Similarly, if Killigrew and Davenant were given alternative choices of the plays, it is hard to explain why the final repertories displayed what is considered a significant advantage for the King's Company.

Cibber's evidence suggests a very different method of selection than the one suggested by later critics, who have considered it to be decided by perceived dramatic inheritance due to links with the pre-war companies. As well as the King's Company trading on their role as inheritors of the King's Men, Nicholl suggested that the Duke's Company may have considered themselves the descendants of Beeston's Boys, and assumed a disproportionate amount of their repertory, although this has been widely disregarded.⁵²³ As such, whether it was Killigrew's position as Charles' favourite which allowed him to obtain the pick of the repertory, or whether it was the connections of his actors to the past plays, particularly the King's Men's, the result seems very clearly to have been advantageous to the King's Men.

It has generally been accepted that the two companies had an agreement not to perform the same plays as each other; again, this was first claimed by Cibber. Even if this was the

⁵¹⁸ Reproduced in full in Allardyce Nicholl, *A History of English Drama 1660-1900. Volume 1, Restoration Drama, 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), pp.353-354.

⁵¹⁹ Gunnar Sorelius, 'The Rights of the Restoration Theatrical Companies in the Older Drama', *Studia Neophilologica*, 7.1 (1965), pp.178-179.

⁵²⁰ 'Adaptations and Revivals', p.43.

⁵²¹ *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber* (Dublin: Re-printed by and for George Faulkner, 1740), p.55.

⁵²² p.175.

⁵²³ This was proposed in 'The Rights of Beeston and D'Avenant in Elizabethan Plays', in *The Review of English Studies* 1:1 (1925), pp.84-91. An early refutation came in Hazelton Spencer, 'The Restoration Play Lists', in *The Review of English Studies*, 1.4 (1925), pp.145-146.

agreement, there is evidence that both companies did perform some of the same plays, as will be evident from reading the repertoires performed at Gibbons' and Lisle's between November 1660 – June 1662. There are several plays, such as *Hamlet*, *The Mad Lovers* and *The Bondman* – which were performed by both companies relatively contemporaneously. It appears that the ownership of certain plays was reassigned; as such, these plays were probably owned and performed by one company and then the other shortly after, rather than being performed simultaneously and in direct competition with each other.⁵²⁴

Nevertheless, the complicated question of how and why the old plays were divided to form the repertoires of the King's and Duke's companies is less important to this thesis than the consideration of how the plays that *did* end up being played at Gibbons' collectively created an identity for the playhouse. Examining the origins of the revived plays that *were* included in the repertory will provide a clearer sense of how the repertory was attached to the past theatrical landscape. In particular, I will consider the repertory's range and spread of authors, the average date of the first pre-war performance, the original company and playhouse of performance, and the genre composition. In each case I have compared this data with that from the Lisle's repertory as far as it has been possible to establish it.⁵²⁵

⁵²⁴ For more information on how the repertoires changed and the rights to plays were redistributed, see Sorelius, esp. p.179.

⁵²⁵ It should be noted that the Lisle's repertory is probably not as complete as the Gibbons' repertory as it is only compiled from Downes and Pepys: there is no equivalent list of the Duke's plays in Henry Herbert's papers. As such, these comparisons are to see if any broad conclusions can be drawn rather than statistically exact.

Authorship of the repertory

The authorship of the Gibbons' Tennis Court repertory is illustrated in the chart below, which demonstrates that the repertory was dominated by Fletcher, with considerable contributions from Jonson, Shirley and Shakespeare.

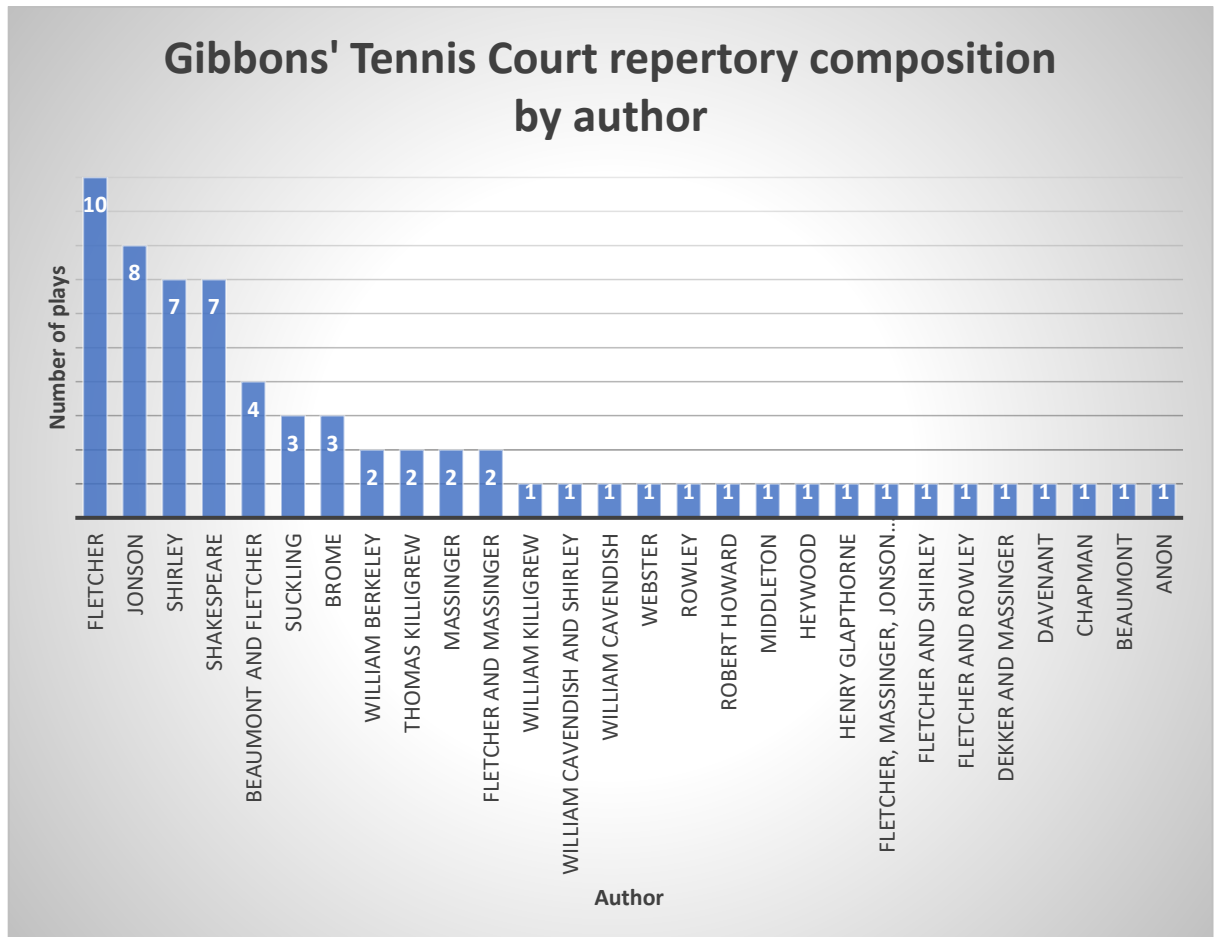


Figure 12. Graph to show Gibbons' Tennis Court repertory composition by author.

Fletcher's dominance in the repertory becomes even more apparent when considering the total number of plays in the repertory that each author contributed to, either alone or collaboratively. As the chart above categorises plays written by each iteration of collaborative partners or groups separately, it is also useful to consider the total number of plays that each author contributed to. For example, in the following chart a Beaumont and Fletcher play will count as one play for both Beaumont and for Fletcher.

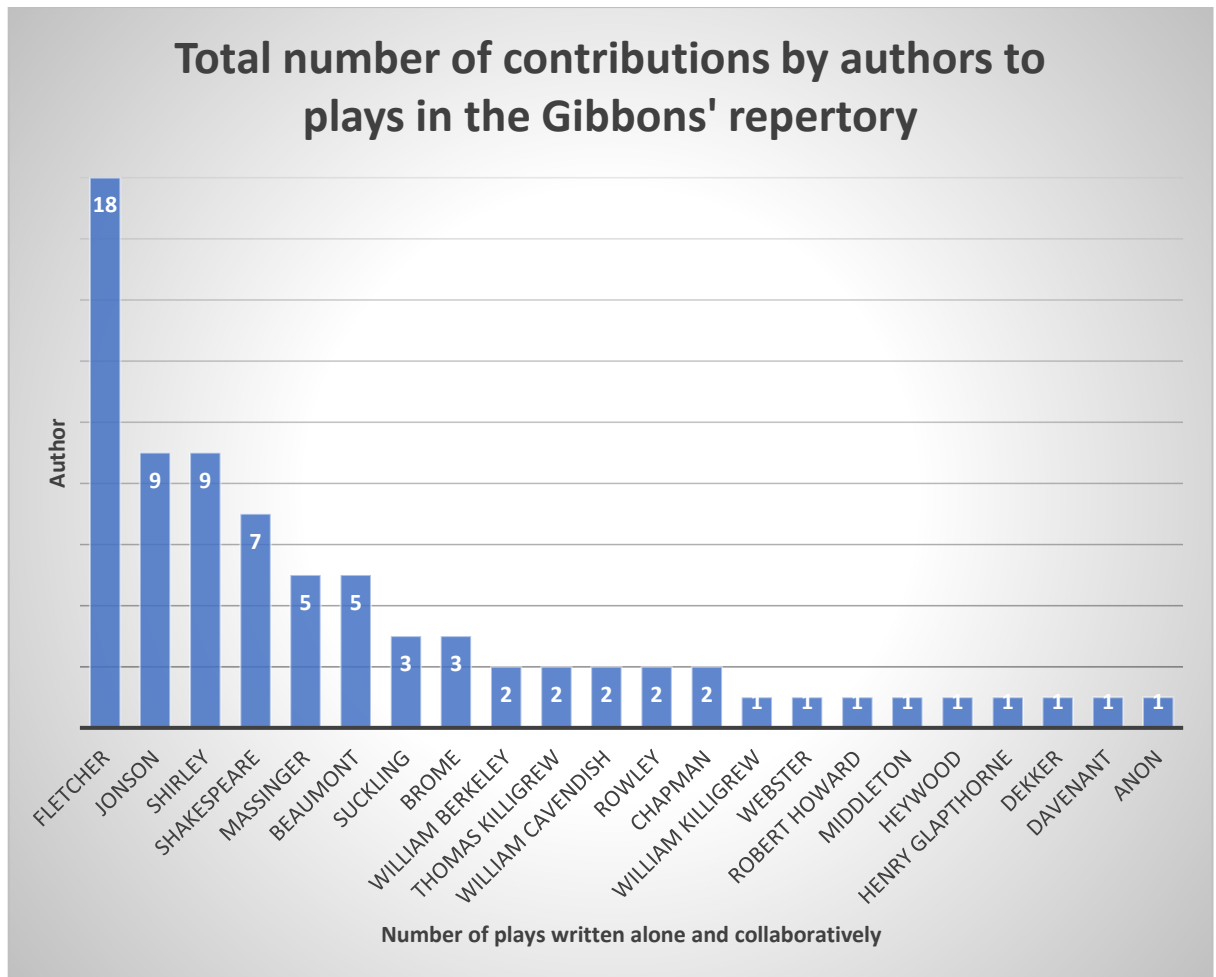


Figure 13. Graph to show the total number of contributions by authors to plays in the Gibbons' repertory.

Of the 67 revived plays performed at Gibbons', Fletcher wrote or co-wrote 18 of them, nearly 27%, and double that of Jonson and Shirley, the next most prolific contributors.⁵²⁶ The Lisle's Tennis Court repertory during the time Gibbons' was operating is strikingly different: although much smaller in the number of productions (either because it actually had a more limited repertory, or because records of other plays being performed there have been lost), the authors who dominate are Davenant and Shakespeare, as illustrated in the following graph.

⁵²⁶ It should further be noted that the plays least certain to have been performed at Gibbons' – those added to the repertory by solely by Downes – consist of seven plays by Jonson and two by Shakespeare. If any of these do happen to be inaccurate and were not performed at the venue, Fletcher's dominance becomes even more apparent.

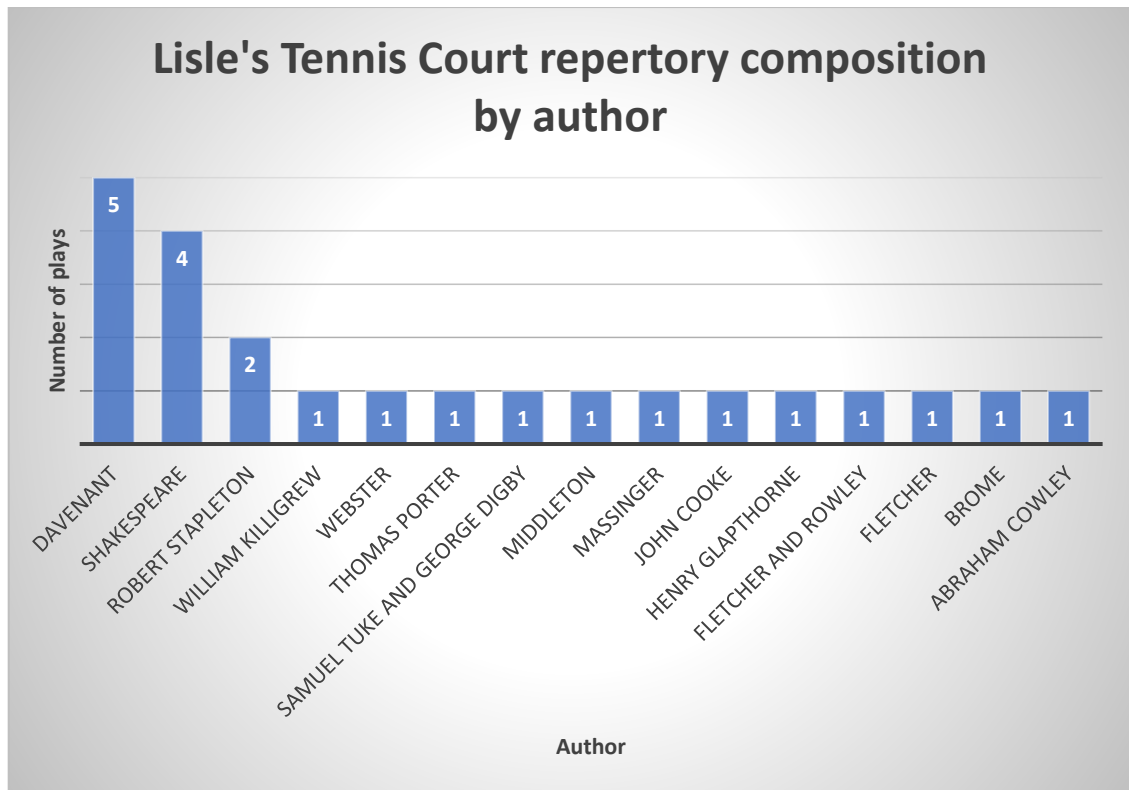


Figure 12. Graph to show Lisle's Tennis Court repertory composition by author.

The dominance of Fletcher over Shakespeare in the Gibbons' repertory is not evidence of Killigrew's bad business sense compared to Davenant, and should not be interpreted as another indicator that Gibbons' was out of touch or doomed to failure: Shakespeare's pre-eminence was not established by this point. While not necessarily representative of general opinion, Pepys' responses to Shakespeare's plays are regularly poor; he calls *Midsummer Night's Dream* 'the most insipid ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life' and vows that he will never see it again (29 September 1662), while *Romeo and Juliet* 'is a play of itself the worst that ever I heard in my life' (1 March 1662) and *Twelfth Night* 'but a silly play, and not related at all to the name or day' (6 January 1663). Of *Othello*, Pepys says he 'heretofore esteemed a mighty good play, but having so lately read "The Adventures of Five Houres," it seems a mean thing' (20 August 1666). However, he does think *Henry IV* 'a good play' (4 June 1661), and although he does not offer a direct opinion on *Hamlet*, only commenting on the skill of the performances when he sees it, his positivity about Betterton's acting in the lead role seems to suggest an appreciation of the text as well.

Not only were opinions on the quality of Shakespeare's work mixed, but Aston Cockaine's preface to Brome's *Five New Plays* in 1653 anticipates a plethora of old dramatists returning to

the stage, with a high degree of accuracy about which writers would be extensively revived.⁵²⁷ Dobson suggests Beaumont and Fletcher are 'singled out for special praise by Cokaine in a manner which was already a critical commonplace in 1653', and that in the 1660s Beaumont and Fletcher were 'younger and more fashionable' than Shakespeare.⁵²⁸

As such, Gibbons' abundance of Fletcher's work was a marker of their success. Nevertheless, this too can be interpreted negatively: Dobson also argues that having better plays meant the King's Company stayed static while the Duke's Company were forced to compensate and innovate. However, as I have argued throughout this chapter, the idea that the King's Company were static and the Duke's Company pioneering is a problematic critical commonplace which risks being overemphasised. Dobson's evidence is a 1674 Prologue to *The Tempest or The Enchanted Island*, which he suggests makes it 'clear that it was precisely the raw deal given the Duke's Company in the sharing of the pre-war repertory which had helped to motivate their emphasis on new stage effects and new writing'.⁵²⁹ This is indeed what the Prologue claims, but the obvious bias of its source means that it ought to be treated a little more sceptically. Certainly, this is complicated by the fact that, as I have already argued, Davenant had started to use scenery in other playhouses considerably before the repertories had been divided, suggesting the Duke's Company's introduction of scenery was not solely a response to an inferior repertory.

Date of original performance for revived plays

To interrogate the claim that Gibbons' was old fashioned, it is useful to consider the mean average date of the revived plays' first performances. At both Gibbons' and Lisle's the average date was 1621, with a span of texts from across most of the pre-wars period: Gibbons' repertory ranged from 1592-1641, and Lisle's from 1595-1659, as they were also reviving Davenant's productions from the Commonwealth. The revised repertories' dates of first performance are revealing in regards to which periods of earlier English drama were popular, and they provide further evidence against the notion of Gibbons' as an 'Elizabethan' playhouse, with Lisle's as the more progressive and modern. As the plays that the two theatres were reviving during this period were very similarly matched in this respect, this challenges the idea of disparity between the venues, at least during the period when they were operating simultaneously. Moreover, if the plays are categorised into monarchs' reigns, Lisle's has a higher percentage of Elizabethan revivals than Gibbons'. While this kind of periodisation does

⁵²⁷ *Five new playes, (viz.) The madd couple well matcht. Novella. Court begger. City witt. Damoiselle. By Richard Brome* (London: Thomas Roycroft for Humphrey Moseley, Richard Marriot, and Thomas Dring, 1653), sig. A2^r-A2^v.

⁵²⁸ 'Adaptations and Revivals', p.42.

⁵²⁹ 'Adaptations and Revivals', p.44.

not reflect lived experience, it is useful for engaging with the scholarly construct of Gibbons' as an 'Elizabethan' playhouse.

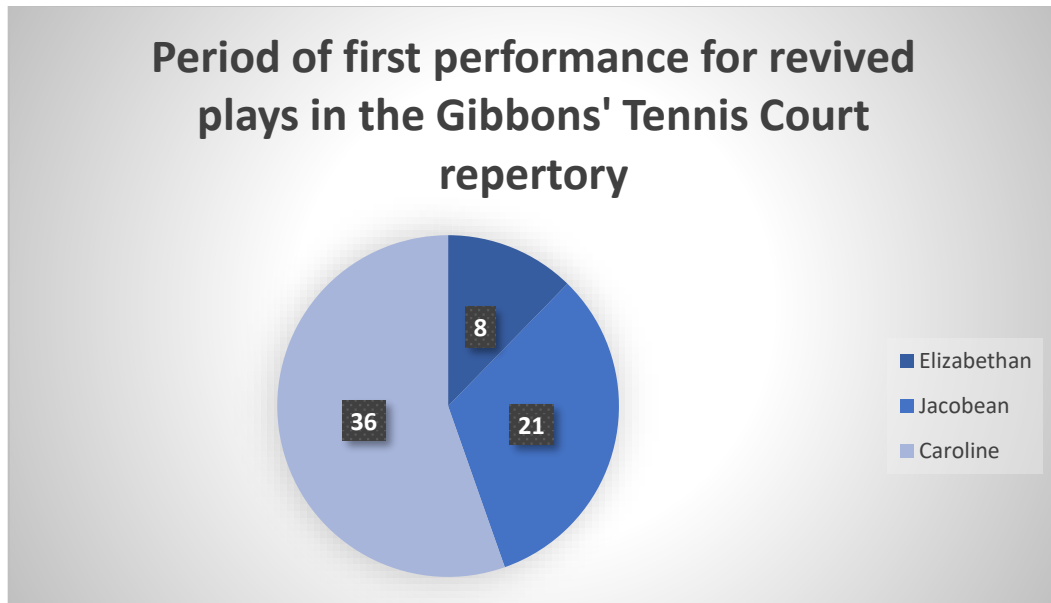


Figure 15. Chart to show period of first performance for revived plays in the Gibbons' Tennis Court repertory.

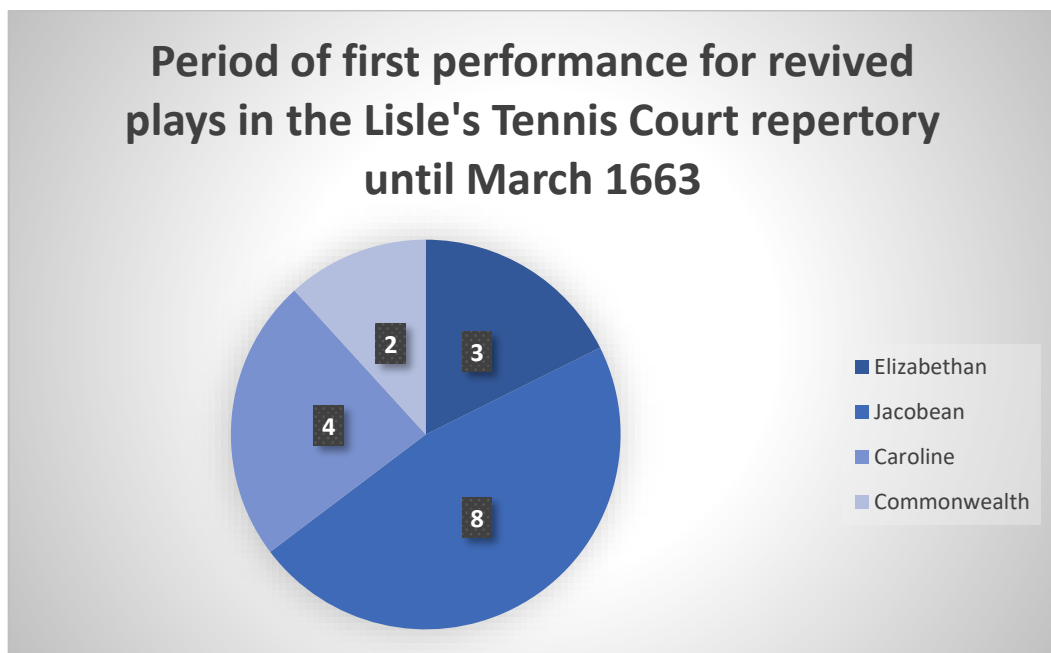


Figure 16. Chart to show period of first performance for revived plays in the Lisle's Tennis Court repertory until March 1663.

In both playhouses, and so probably in Restoration appetites generally, Jacobean drama constituted the highest percentage of the repertory, but Caroline plays were substantially more popular than Elizabethan, with only a few plays from this era continuing in repertory. As a percentage of the revival repertory, Gibbons' had a smaller number of Elizabethan plays than Lisle's – although the disparity between repertory sizes should be considered. The Elizabethan plays that were performed in both houses were all written by Shakespeare and in a couple of instances Jonson, and perhaps the anonymous author of *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* if this was written before March 1603. In any case, in the 1660s this was probably believed to have been written by Shakespeare as well, since it had been attributed to him by Humphrey Moseley in 1653, followed by Edward Archer in 1656 and Francis Kirkman in 1661.⁵³⁰

It is perhaps understandable that audiences were more interested in plays that had been new within their living memory, and may have been closer to their own social conventions and less dated. Nevertheless, it is notable that relatively little of the Restoration repertories were from the Elizabethan period and a substantial amount from the Caroline era, because it is in opposition to contemporary taste in early modern drama, which shows a distinct preference for late Elizabethan and early Jacobean plays. With 1621 as the average date of first performance, this does not appear to have been the case in the early 1660s. This is also demonstrative evidence of how flawed the idea of Gibbons' Tennis Court being an 'Elizabethan' stage is: it certainly was not Elizabethan in repertory.

Genre of plays

Differences between genre of plays in the Gibbons' and Lisle's revival repertories are quite slight, as illustrated in the graphs below.

⁵³⁰ Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, IV, p.30.

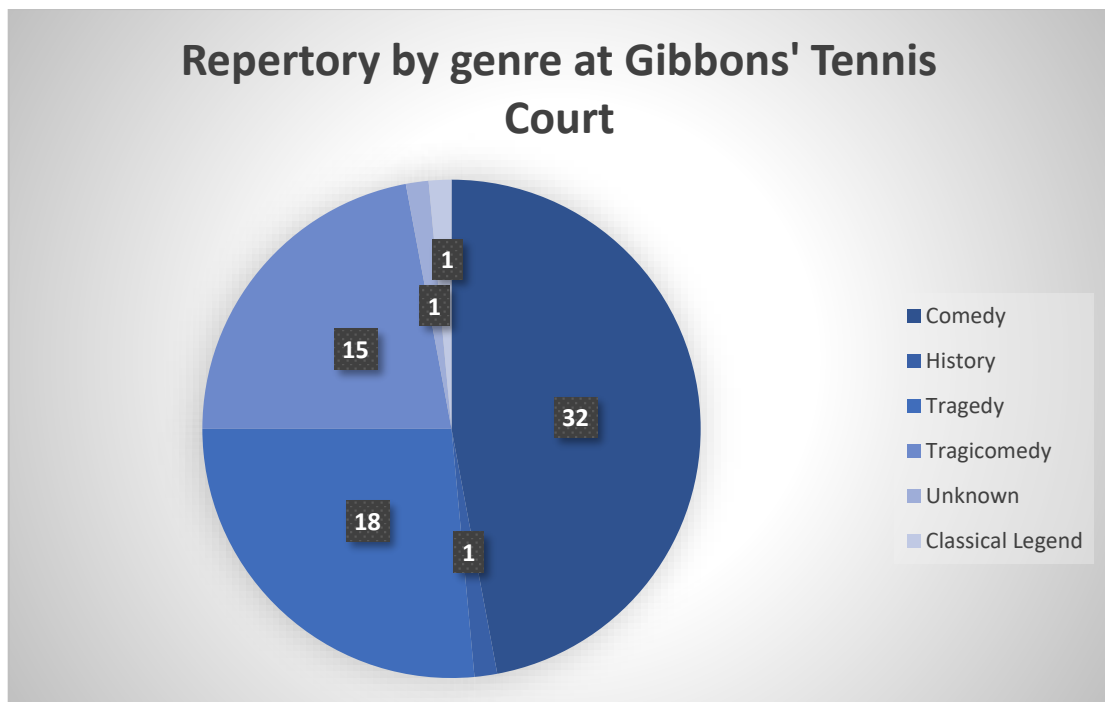


Figure 17. Chart to show repertory by genre at Gibbons' Tennis Court.

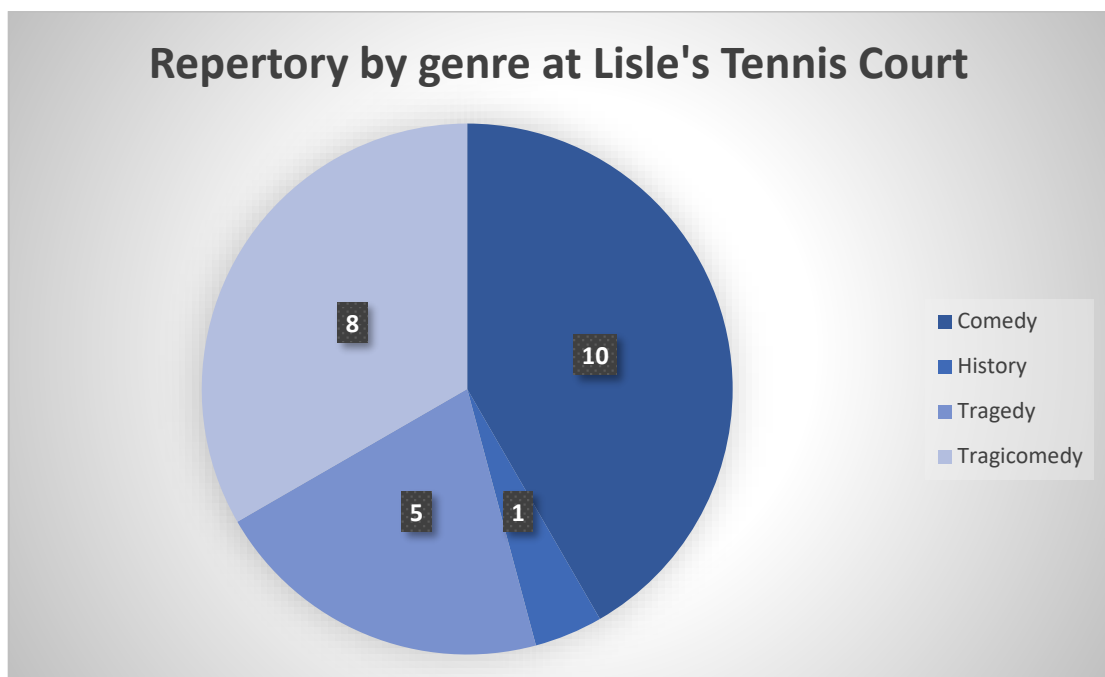


Figure 18. Chart to show repertory by genre at Lisle's Tennis Court.

The main difference between the genres of plays in the revival repertories is a slight preference for tragicomedy at Lisle's compared to Gibbons'. Nevertheless, comedy dominates both the repertories, particularly at Gibbons' where it accounts for almost half of the plays performed.

Indeed, Pepys implies that the King's Company are most suited to comedies at this time: he describes *The Virgin Martyr* as 'a good play but too sober for the company'.⁵³¹ While this is only Pepys' opinion, and could be his personal disposition – he also describes *The Maid's Tragedy* as too sad (16 May 1661) – when viewed in conjunction with the dominance of comedy at Gibbons', it suggests that the company may have been particularly known for their comic performances, perhaps in contrast to the tragicomic spectacles on offer at Lisle's.

Conclusions about the revival repertory

As such, considering the broad trends of the revival repertory at Gibbons' shows that it was dominated by Fletcher, and although it was linked to the King's Men so, to some degree, was Lisle's. Gibbons' seems likely to have specialised in comedy in particular, and Lisle's had a stronger association with tragi-comedy, although the key conclusion is that overall the demographic composition of the repertories was similar. A major difference which could be noted is a much greater number of different plays at Gibbons', but this conclusion is not reliable as during the period considered they were operating for unequal amounts of time, and the known Lisle's repertory is likely to be less complete. Nevertheless, with these qualifiers in place a greater variety of plays does seem to accurately reflect the claim that Gibbons' managed to obtain was what considered a superior repertory of pre-war plays.

Further, the revival repertory supports my critique of the conceptualisation of Gibbons' as a backward-looking, 'Elizabethan' venue in contrast with a progressive, innovative Lisle's.

⁵³¹ 16 February 1661.

New plays at Gibbons' Tennis Court

The plays at Gibbons' Tennis Court were not only revivals: there were three newly written pieces performed there by the King's Company. Commissioning new drama is demonstrative evidence against the claim that Gibbons' was backward-looking and retrospective, especially as there were disincentives for producing new work. As the King's Company had obtained a superior repertory when the old plays were divided they did not need to introduce new ones to remain popular and marketable. Furthermore, new plays were expensive: as well having to pay the playwright, Henry Herbert made Killigrew sign a document stating he would pay twice as much to perform a new play (40 shillings) than a revived one (20 shillings).⁵³² In practical terms, there were few experienced playwrights left as most former professionals were dead. Davenant and Killigrew themselves were two of the few who were still active, and although Shirley survived he was relatively elderly and died after the Great Fire in 1666.⁵³³ The new plays were recorded by Henry Herbert as:

Selindra, [William Killigrew] 3 March 1662
The Surprisall, [Robert Howard] 23 April 1662
Cornelia, sir W. Bartleys 1 June 1662 [now lost]⁵³⁴

While this is a small number, the lack of more new material at Gibbons' does not necessarily suggest it was backward-looking: this was a trend throughout the Restoration which extended far beyond Gibbons'. As Dobson notes, 'the new playwrights of the Restoration [made] a comparatively small impact on this all-revival repertory over the next forty years'.⁵³⁵ Indeed, the model of augmenting an existing repertory with new plays simply compounded previous theatrical practice as 'the repertories of the pre-Civil War playhouses had always included a substantial percentage of revived plays, some of them half a century old by the time the theatres were closed in 1642'.⁵³⁶ Indeed, this model has not fully been replaced: many contemporary English theatres operate just such a mixed theatrical output, still including plays as far back as the late sixteenth century.

Insight into the responses to developing dramatic trends can be gained from an anonymous poem whose author reports on the new plays on offer. It is generally critical and satirical in

⁵³² Bawcutt, *Control and Censorship*, pp.267-268.

⁵³³ Ira Clark, 'Shirley, James (*bap.* 1596, *d.* 1666)', in *ODNB*, Oxford University Press (2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/25427>

⁵³⁴ Adams, *Dramatic Records*, p.118.

⁵³⁵ 'Adaptations and Revivals', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, ed. by Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.41.

⁵³⁶ Dobson, 'Adaptations and Revivals', p.40.

tone, describing ‘all the new playes we have had/ Indifferent good or indifferent bad’.⁵³⁷ Of Gibbons’ Tennis Court it says:

First then to speak of his Majestys Theatre
Where one would imagine Playes should be better
Love att first sight did lead the first dance
But att second sight it had the mischance
To be so dash’t out of Countenance as
It never after durst shew itt’s face
All though its bashfullnesse as tis thought
Be far from being the Authors ffault
For the surprizall it was a good prooffe
By its getting them mony it took well enough
Without which Divell take the Play
Be it never so good the Actors say
But they may thanke God with all their hart
That Lacy played Brankadoros part
For Cornelia they all doe say
There was abundance of witt in the play
Indeed t’ had so much t’ was the worse for ‘t
For t’ was to witty for the vulgar sort
And they who’d have poetts their Benefactors
Say witt without mony’s naught for the Actors
O’ th’ contrary Salendina for witt
Most say did come far short of it
And though I confesse there was some fault there
Yett this I’ll say in defense of the Author
A good Plott though ill writ looks more like a Play
Then all your fine lines when the plot is away⁵³⁸

It is significant that the author has chosen to focus solely on new plays without including any from the pre-war repertoires. The ostensible purpose of the poem is a letter informing a friend in the countryside of new theatrical developments in the theatre, so perhaps it is assumed that the old plays will already be known to the reader. Nevertheless, this demonstrates a division between old and new plays; they were conceived, at least by this individual, as different entities. Despite this, the author considers *The Princess* to be a new play, although it was a revival, first performed in 1638. It does not appear to have been advertised or reputed to be a new play, as Pepys notes that it was ‘the first time it hath been acted since before the troubles’.⁵³⁹ The author has probably made a mistake and assumed that the play was new, perhaps due to knowing that Killigrew was the author. Nevertheless, this error is extremely interesting in terms of style: it demonstrates that the degree of continuity between theatrical

⁵³⁷ BL Add.MS. 34,217, fol. 31b, cited in Hotson, p.247.

⁵³⁸ BL Add.MS. 34,217, fol. 31b, cited in Hotson, p.246.

⁵³⁹ 29 Nov 1661.

writing from the 1630s and the early 1660s was so strong that the two could not necessarily be distinguished from each other.

The author emphasises their decision to list Gibbons' Tennis Court before Lisle's. The opening line '[f]irst then to speak of his Majestys Theatre' perhaps demonstrates an ideological dominance bestowed on Gibbons' for housing the King's Company, even if the implied grandiosity is undermined by the next line. While it is not a flattering take on the Gibbons' repertory, the analysis of Lisle's is equally damning:

To come to the other Theatre now
Where the Knight with his Scenes doth keep much adoe
For the Siege of Rhodes all say
It is an everlasting Play
Though they wonder now Roxalana is gon
What shift it makes to hold out so long
For when the second part tooke, but for Bully
The ffirst did not satisfie soe fully
The Cutter of Coleman street had more fame
Before the Author chang'd its name
And shewed himselfe an Englishman right
By mending of things to spoyle them quite
And hee's more to blame because he can tell
(No better) to make new strings soe well
Then came the Knight agen with his Lawe
Against Lovers the worst that ever you sawe
In dressing of which he playnely did shew it
Hee was a far better Cooke than a Poet
And only he the Art of it had
Of two good Playes to make one bad
And these are all the new playes we have had
Indifferent good or indifferent bad
When they'l be worse, or when they'l be better
Is more for a Prophetie then for a letter

Gibbons' pre-eminent position is reinforced by the trivialising epithet 'the other theatre' bestowed on Lisle's: the playhouse is not mentioned by name or, like Gibbons', by patron. Killigrew is not specifically mentioned except as the author of *Love at First Sight*, but the treatment of Davenant is derisive, and his knighthood used to satirize him in the mock-chivalric tradition. '[T]he Knight with his Scenes doth keep much adoe' conjures the idea of a bumbling and quixotic character, and implies that he personally is clattering around causing noise and havoc, in which his scenery is contemptuously implicated. This portrayal of Davenant is reinforced next time he is mentioned: '[t]hen came the Knight agen with his Lawe/ Against Lovers the worst that ever you sawe' recalls the figure of the incompetent chivalric knight charging repeatedly and vaingloriously towards defeat. It is notable when reflecting on the author's perception of what constitutes the 'new' that revised plays are included in the categorisation, but nevertheless attract scorn as a result of their perceived

deterioration. Not only is Davenant accused of managing '[o]f two good Playes to make one bad', but Cowley's revision of his own work makes him 'an Englishman right/ By mending of things to spoyle them quite'. It is particularly interesting that the author claims that Cowley's play 'The Cutter of Coleman street had more fame/ Before the Author chang'd its name', as in his collected works in 1668 Cowley claims that the original version, *The Guardian*, was published in a mangled version without his consent or knowledge in 1650, after it had been

made and acted before the *Prince*, in his passage through *Cambridge* towards *York*, at the beginning of the late unhappy War; or rather neither *made* nor *acted*, but *rough-drawn* only, and *repeated*; for the haste was so great, that it could neither be *revised* or *perfected* by the *Author*.⁵⁴⁰

It is unclear whether the author of the poem genuinely prized *The Guardian* as having 'more fame', perhaps revering it for its distinctive royalist origins, or whether the hurried and unperfected nature of this first version of the play is being utilised to make the insult to the revised version more resounding. Hotson's reflection on the poem is that the 'metre could hardly be worse', but although the metre is not completely regular, the tetrameter creates a momentum which complements the poem's mocking content.⁵⁴¹ Adding to this, the rhyming couplets imbue the poem a sense of levity, while the masculine endings throughout are forceful, allowing certain rhymes to act as punchlines.

The author's choice to write the poem focusing specifically on new plays and not, for example, those which were most interesting, popular or disliked, suggests that audiences were aware to some degree of where plays derived from: who their author was and what era they were written in. Furthermore, it may suggest that Pepys was not alone in his extensive patronage of the theatre, as the author has presumably seen the plays mentioned, or at least heard them discussed enough to summarise public opinion of them.

Case study of William Killigrew's *Selindra*: plot, wit and the tragi-comic genre

The poem cited in the previous section implies responses to *Selindra* considered it to be lacking in wit and thus not especially popular, although the author grants that it is well-plotted, and as such feels like a coherent play. This was probably a common opinion of William Killigrew's work as the commendatory verses to *Three Plays* in 1664 support a sense of him as a writer who crafted good plots and wrote modest rather than ribald plays. He is often complimented on these features, but rarely for wit and never for humour. Robert Stapylton speaks to the

⁵⁴⁰ Abraham Cowley, *The Works of Abraham Cowley. Consisting of Those which were formerly Printed: and Those which he Design'd for the Press, Now Published out of the Authors Original Copies* (London: J.M. for Henry Herringman, 1668), sig. B3^v.

⁵⁴¹ p.247.

personified concept of 'envy', asking '[a]rt thou not vexed to see the Plotts well lay'd,/ The language pure, and every Sentence weigh'd?'⁵⁴² Meanwhile a translation of Latin verse by T. L. Waller states

That thy wise, and modest Muse,
Flies the Stages Looser-Use;
Not Baudry Wit, does falsely Name,
And to move Laughter, puts off Shame⁵⁴³

It appears that Killigrew altered his play *Pandora* when it proved unpopular onstage. Edmund Waller flatters him by claiming that

So must the Writer, whose productions should
Take with the Vulgar, be of vulgar Mould;
While Nobler Fancies make a flight too high,
For Common view, and lessen as they fly⁵⁴⁴

Waller further suggests the tastes of the audience and the era are at fault rather than Killigrew's work, suggesting that he

[...] should teach our Age the way,
Of judging well, then thus have chang'd your Play;
You had oblig'd us by imploying wit,
Not to reform Pandora, but the Pit⁵⁴⁵

These are conventional sentiments in dedicatory verses, especially in consolation for unpopularity, but the quantity of references is indicative of more than just custom. Indeed, this sense of Killigrew's work is apparent in the text of *Selindra*. There are not any discernible attempts at humour, and it presents as unwaveringly earnest, without much nuance in the characters, who adhere to type. The plot is particularly neat and compelling as the audience is kept unaware of some characters' motivations and there are numerous plot twists. Killigrew frequently reveals information to the audience that is unknown to a given character so they can anticipate what is about to happen, and inversely holds back details which the characters *are* aware of. This combination of anticipation and revelation produces an effective and gripping plot. An example of the latter comes after *Selindra* has been besieged with unwanted interest from Cleonel and Phillocles; as Cleonel's father Cecropius has been providing counsel to the king about this since the start of Act 2, it is an unanticipated surprise at the end of this act that Cecropius has *also* been attempting to woo her. *Selindra*'s response demonstrates that

⁵⁴² Killigrew, *Three playes*, sig. B2^v.

⁵⁴³ Killigrew, *Three playes*, sig. B1^r.

⁵⁴⁴ Killigrew, *Three playes*, sig. B2^r.

⁵⁴⁵ Killigrew, *Three playes*, sig. B2^r.

she has contended with his overtures before, but this has not been previously alluded to by her, or revealed by Cecropius.

The former device is used when Cleonel offers to escort Selindra to Hungary to save her from rape and poisoning by his father. The audience is justified in assuming - as Selindra does - that he will keep his vow not to take her to his castle and rape her, since his behaviour thus far has been honourable. In the next scene Antillacus tells Phillocles that he saw 'Cleonel, with Selindra past the Ports; and about two hours after were met on that way that leads to his Castle'.⁵⁴⁶ As Selindra is offstage, this allows the audience to anticipate her danger before it occurs. But doubt of the report's accuracy is brought back almost immediately, when less than two pages later Phillocles cannot find them on the road to the castle. He soliloquizes that '[t]hose at the Castle do not hear of Cleonel, nor expect him there; sure Antillacus did mistake them, or I him, which way now to take it I know not'.⁵⁴⁷ This allows the audience time to return to their original position, now expecting coincidences to result from Phillocles' flight from his father's custody, before Cleonel and Selindra are heard two lines later. This produces a frequently-altering plot without resorting to extravagant interventions or unlikely twists, but which still manages to hold suspense and alter the pace and direction of the play.

The accusation that *Selindra* lacks 'wit' is interesting. The multiple meanings of the word suggest it could imply that the play is simplistic and unintelligent in its understanding, that it lacks humour, or both.⁵⁴⁸ If the latter, it could be inferred that there was already a desire for the irreverent wit-based dialogue that had developed by the 1670s, which the Restoration is most readily associated with. However, these stereotypically Restoration plays are all comedies: it is not necessarily apt to compare the two. As a tragicomedy, or perhaps conceptualised by Killigrew as a romance, humour is not necessarily expected from *Selindra*, and there are no *failed* attempts at humorous wordplay: it is simply not present.

However, it seems likely that the audience probably did expect humour from the first new play performed at Gibbons', and that the lack of it was a contributing factor in its lukewarm reception. Firstly, while tragicomedies comprised a sizeable 22% percent of Gibbons' revival repertory, it was not the form most associated with the playhouse: more than twice as many comedies were performed there, making up nearly half of their total plays. It could be argued that audiences did not expect humour from tragicomedies given Fletcher's famous definition of the genre c.1609:

⁵⁴⁶ Killigrew, *Three playes*, p.49.

⁵⁴⁷ Killigrew, *Three playes*, p.51.

⁵⁴⁸ OED Online, 'wit, n.', <<http://www.oed.com>> [accessed 3 November 2016], esp. definitions 5, 7 and 8.

A tragic-comedy is not so-called in respect of mirth and killing but in respect it wants deaths, which is enough to make it no tragedie, yet brings some neere it, which is inough to make it no comedie⁵⁴⁹

Tragicomedy is not, he adds, the characters ‘sometimes laughing together, and sometimes killing one another’.⁵⁵⁰ However, Gordon McMullan and Jonathon Hope have complicated the validity of this definition, arguing that as Fletcher is vindicating *The Faithful Shepherdess*’s failure in performance and attempting to elevate it to a literary status, this definition is of questionable value in providing ‘a considered and coherent definition (or prediction) of tragicomedy across the period’.⁵⁵¹ Fletcher’s use of the category ‘tragicomedy’ in this context, they argue, is not necessarily applicable ‘to the vast number of plays [...] which we now characterize as tragicomedies’, including most of his subsequent tragicomedies, in which he does not adhere to his earlier definition.⁵⁵² Thus, they conclude, ‘*The Faithful Shepherdess* is perhaps the last place we should look for a working definition of tragicomedy in the Jacobean and Caroline period’ and the assumption that English tragicomedy relied on Italianate models from 1610 onwards is not the case.⁵⁵³

Rather, under the umbrella term ‘tragicomedy’ – which was still not in consistent use as a generic description – there are a number of different traditions. While Fletcher’s *The Faithful Shepherdess* was written in the Italianate pastoral romance style, most of the later public tragicomedies were in a different tradition of English tragicomedy, which was far less generically specific, but broadly characterised by exactly the mixture of atmosphere and events that Fletcher originally rejects. McMullan and Hope suggest tragicomedy can range from ‘popular-theatre plays in the Elizabethan tradition to the circumscribed romances of Ben Jonson’s last phase, from the resonantly political late plays and collaborations of Shakespeare to the pastoral drama written especially for the feminocentric court of Henrietta Maria’.⁵⁵⁴ As such, it is important to distinguish between distinct forms of play which are considered under the same tragicomic label. Nancy Klein Maguire argues that the Restoration developed two subgenres of tragicomedy: divided tragicomedy, which derived from Fletcherian-Caroline antecedents, and the rhymed heroic play, which was derived from the court masque.⁵⁵⁵ Clearly, *Selindra* was not a rhymed heroic play but a divided tragicomedy, which Lois Potter argues ‘in

⁵⁴⁹ *The faithfull shepheardesse. By Iohn Fletcher* (London: Edward Allde for R. Bonian and H. Walley, 1610?), sig. A3^v.

⁵⁵⁰ *Faithfull shepheardesse*, sig. A3^v.

⁵⁵¹ ‘Introduction: The Politics of Tragicomedy, 1610-50’, in *The Politics of Tragicomedy* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.3.

⁵⁵² ‘Politics of Tragicomedy’, p.3.

⁵⁵³ ‘Politics of Tragicomedy’, p.4, p.2.

⁵⁵⁴ ‘Politics of Tragicomedy’, p.7.

⁵⁵⁵ Nancy Klein Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration: English tragicomedy, 1660-1671* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.10.

the public theatre, never quite lost its sixteenth-century meaning: a play which contained both tragic and comic elements'.⁵⁵⁶ As such, audiences may have expected comedy from *Selindra* in accordance with the conventions of this strand of the tragicomic tradition: many tragicomedies in Gibbons' revived repertory included humour, so the audience's disappointment in the play may have resulted from this expectation of a comic element.

Scholarship of the first years of Restoration drama tends to consider it an inferior emulation of old traditions. As such, it has been argued that *Selindra* was 'not indicating new directions, [and] Killigrew's derivative play tells us how much the Fletcherian-Caroline tradition influenced Restoration tragicomedy. The play resembles the pre-Commonwealth revivals (with no concern for staging) that Thomas Killigrew was producing at his first theatre.'⁵⁵⁷ However, it is unclear that similarities with the past were considered negatively: T. P. flatters Killigrew by comparing him to past poets, stating that while other writers 'vex the Subject that we write upon,/ [...] all you write is Emanation' (sig. A3^v). As such, Killigrew is told that

Thus you retrieve Old Time; for just as then
The Golden Age, was but the Iron Men;
So to Posterity it may be told
Our Age is Iron, but our Wits are Gold

Thus, by the early 1660s past playwrights were already being considered in a historical, literary and intellectual context. The historicised notion of the pre-war years as a 'Golden Age', which has been influential ever since, was already apparent, and as such it is a compliment to Killigrew that he recalls work by previous playwrights rather than it being considered unoriginal. Nevertheless, the lack of 'wit' in his plays demonstrates that, as Maguire notes, while the 'incipient' plays 'look towards the past [...] they already suggest the new generic formations'.⁵⁵⁸ William Killigrew's plays share with 'Restoration tragicomedy a marked concern with political issues of current interest, focusing as they do on matters of succession, usurpation, and royal and paternal authority', and the audience response to *Selindra* highlights the penchant for witty drama in the second half of the seventeenth century.⁵⁵⁹ Indeed, the prologue to *The Surprisal*, the other extant new play performed at Gibbons', complains of the audience's greed for innovative wit in drama:

[...] let me tell you, this Excise on Wit,
Though undiscern'd, consumes the Stock so fast,
That no new Fancy will be left at last.
Wit's not like Money; Money though paid in

⁵⁵⁶ 'The "Whole Truth" of Restoration Tragicomedy', in *Renaissance Tragicomedy: Explorations in Genre and Politics*, ed. by Nancy Klein Maguire (New York: AMS Press, 1987), p.197.

⁵⁵⁷ Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration*, p.63.

⁵⁵⁸ *Regicide and Restoration*, p.64.

⁵⁵⁹ J. P. Vander Motten, 'Killigrew, Sir William (bap. 1606, d. 1695)', in *ODNB*, Oxford University Press (2004) <doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/15541>

Passes about, and is receiv'd agen:
 But Wit when it has once been paid before,
 There it lies dead, 'tis currant then no more.
 Nor must we plead for what we do present,
 As in Law-Cases, by a Precedent:
 Poets and Mountebanks in this strange Age
 Practice with equal hopes upon the Stage;
 For 'tis expected they shou'd both apply
 To every Humour some new Remedy:
 And one's as likely every man to please,
 As t'other to cure every man's Disease.⁵⁶⁰

Howard's lament that playwrights are required to innovate witty devices and language for their plays impossibly quickly demonstrates that in this aspect at least, new drama was not yet able to satisfy audiences. However, the clarity with which Howard understands what will be popular demonstrates that drama at Gibbons' sought to respond to the desires of the audience, while modelling themselves on existing dramatic traditions and pre-empting those which were to come.

⁵⁶⁰ Robert Howard, *Four new plays, viz: The Surprisal, The Committee, } Comedies. The Indian Queen, The Vestal Virgin, } Tragedies* (London: Henry Herringman, 1665), sig. B2^v.

4. Legacy and influence on English theatre tradition

After the King's Company

Gibbons' Tennis Court had an ongoing theatrical legacy after the King's Company left; as with the other playhouses discussed theatrical traces and associations remained with the venue and the surrounding area. Gibbons' began to function as a home for prize fights when the King's Company left, seemingly a common quasi-theatrical use for spaces that no longer operated as playhouses in the early modern period, and sometimes for those that still did.⁵⁶¹ This trend demonstrates continuity in the ways that theatrical spaces were re-appropriated for quasi-dramatic purposes other than the performance of plays: the Curtain had been put to exactly the same use decades previously. Pepys records going to see the first prize fought at Gibbons'. He says that he:

walked to the New Theatre, which, since the King's players are gone to the Royal one, is this day begun to be employed by the fencers to play prizes at. And here I came and saw the first prize I ever saw in my life: and it was between one Mathews, who did beat at all weapons, and one Westwicke, who was soundly cut several times both in the head and legs, that he was all over blood: and other deadly blows they did give and take in very good earnest, till Westwicke was in a most sad pickle. They fought at eight weapons, three bouts at each weapon. It was very well worth seeing, because I did till this day think that it has only been a cheat; but this being upon a private quarrel, they did it in good earnest [...] So, well pleased for once with this sight, I walked home, doing several businesses by the way⁵⁶²

The event is clearly conceived of as an entertainment; Pepys expects the fighting to be half-hearted or choreographed, and is surprised that it is genuine rather than a performative imitation. It is curious that Pepys calls the space as 'the New Theatre'. It was simply 'the Theatre' while the King's Company were resident there; he last referred to it as 'the New Theatre' on 31 December 1660, shortly after it had opened. That Pepys reverts to calling Gibbons' 'new' as a way of differentiating it from Bridges Street implies that its identity as the first new, fully-operating, licit playhouse since Salisbury Court was an association that stuck and was important to how Londoners conceptualised it. Moreover, still referring to Gibbons' as a theatre when it had ceased to be one demonstrates that, for Pepys at least, the identity of the playhouse overwrote the space's original purpose as a tennis court.

It is not exceptional that Pepys links the building to its previous purpose given that he watched a play there less than two months previously. However, this is still the dominant connotation five years later when he reports that his wife saw 'a play at the New Nursery,

⁵⁶¹ From c.1570-c.1590 fencers almost exclusively played their prizes in inn-playhouses and at the Curtain and Theatre, see Brownstein, 'A Record of London Inn-Playhouses', p.18.

⁵⁶² 1 June 1663.

which is set up at the house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, which was formerly the King's house'.⁵⁶³ Elizabeth Pepys had seen the King's Company perform at Gibbons' at least fifteen times, and almost certainly more which were not recorded by her husband; it is interesting to speculate whether the memory of the space and curiosity to see it used for performance again influenced her decision to visit the nursery. Moreover, it is unlikely to be a coincidence that the nursery chose to inhabit a building which used to be a theatre; the space's theatrical history must have had some influence. While practical considerations could be involved, reusing a former playhouse would appeal if reputation and custom could be increased by theatrical associations and memory.

Similarly, the uses of Lisle's Tennis Court show how spatial memory can operate over a number of decades. Built as a tennis court in 1656, it was used by the Duke's Men as a theatre between 1663-1674 before reverting to a tennis court from 1674-1695, when Thomas Betterton reconverted it into a theatre.⁵⁶⁴ Gibbons' was also used as a tennis court again after its life as a nursery theatre, as demonstrated in *A True Widow*:

Let's make a match at Tennis to day [...] How will that Gentleman and you play with *Stanmore*, and I keep his back hand at Gibbonses?⁵⁶⁵

When Lisle's was demolished in 1714 a third theatre besides Gibbons' and Lisle's was built in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Langhans notes that despite its different design, this theatre has been confused with both Lisle's and Gibbons', and its location suggests it was built in the area due to the theatrical pedigree of Lincoln's Inn Fields.⁵⁶⁶

After the end of the building

The theatrical resonances of Gibbons' Tennis Court theatre did not cease when the building burnt down in 1809. Langhan's collated images of the theatre site demonstrates that the area was named 'Play House yard' in 1706 and 1738, although by Roque's map of London in 1746 it is replaced by 'Bear Yard', demonstrating again the spatial and cultural intimacy of drama and blood sports.⁵⁶⁷ Like the Curtain, which was still referred to as the 'Curtain playhouse' in 1698, long after it had been converted into tenements, the cultural memory that the area was a theatrical place persisted. In Gibbons' case, this memory – and perhaps the impulse to trade off the spatial experiences of the past – manifested again with a new theatre being built on the

⁵⁶³ 23 April 1669.

⁵⁶⁴ Langhans, 'Vere Street', p.179.

⁵⁶⁵ Thomas Shadwell, *A True Widow* (London: Benjamin Tooke, 1679), p.7-8.

⁵⁶⁶ 'Vere Street', p.182.

⁵⁶⁷ John Rocque, *The A-Z Georgian London* (Lympe Castle, Kent: Harry Margary in association with Guildhall Library, London, 1981), p.11.

same land: the London Opera House, which opened in 1911.⁵⁶⁸ This theatre was built in the Beaux-Arts style, and the enormous size, classical style and ornate grandeur would certainly not been reminiscent of Gibbons' Tennis Court: it was a four-tier auditorium which held around 2,500 people.⁵⁶⁹ Whether or not Oscar Hammerstein, the builder and impresario of the London Opera House, knew the history of the area is uncertain, as the gap between the building's ruin in 1809 and the new building in 1911 is substantial. However, if the idea that theatrical resonances could have persisted through cultural and architectural memory seems far-fetched it should be noted that many other geographic signifiers in the area remain intact: the road where the Gibbons' stood is still called Portugal Street – renamed after Catherine of Braganza's nation when she became queen in 1662 – which adjoins Clare Market, just as it did when Gibbons' Tennis Court stood there. Not much previously in 1878 Walter Thornbury romantically painted the theatrical history of Portugal Street, surmising that 'in olden days it must have been lively and gay; for did not the Lincoln's Inn Theatre once cover the site?'.⁵⁷⁰ This demonstrates that specific knowledge about the theatrical past was still current and circulating in publication, and at least demonstrates that it is perfectly possible Hammerstein knew about the site's theatrical pedigree.

Moreover, since 1911 the plot has been used almost continuously as a space for theatrical or quasi-theatrical entertainments. Hammerstein's Opera House failed after poor critical reception: in June 1912 *The Musical Times* described the building as 'lofty in aspiration and ideal, colossal in plan and structure, picturesque in conception and external qualities' but stated that its production of 'The Children of Don' was 'a failure so unqualified' that it 'may have set back the growth of native art in connection with the lyric stage'.⁵⁷¹ The Opera House closed after two seasons and was used as a music hall and then – echoing the fate of its predecessor Gibbons' Tennis Court – 'rented for all sorts of entertainments from prize fights up'.⁵⁷²

The building became an auditorium for a new kind of dramatic entertainment, when Oswald Stoll reopened it as a cinema and variety theatre in July 1916, before changing its name to Stoll Picture House in April 1917 and 'playing continuous pictures, changed twice weekly, with an orchestra and vocal music'.⁵⁷³ This became the Stoll Theatre and from 1941 revived popular

⁵⁶⁸ Tim Rutherford-Johnson, Michael Kennedy and Joyce Bourne Kennedy, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 6th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.504.

⁵⁶⁹ Hermann Klein, 'The London Opera House', in *The Musical Times*, 52.826, (1911), 785–786, p.785.

⁵⁷⁰ 'St Clement Danes: The parish', in *Old and New London: Volume 3* (London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, 1878), p.28.

⁵⁷¹ Hermann Klein, 'London Opera House', in *The Musical Times*, 53.833 (1912), p.450.

⁵⁷² 'Cables: STOLL STAGING REVUE AT THE LONDON OPERA HOUSE', *Variety (Archive: 1905-2000)*, May 26 1916, 42.13, p.4.

⁵⁷³ 'STOLL'S PICTURE HOUSE,' *Variety (Archive: 1905-2000)*, May 04 1917, 46.10, p.4.

musicals, and also occasionally housed ice shows and ballet.⁵⁷⁴ If this repertory was fairly distinct from the entertainments at Gibbons', a strong link appears in the last play performed at the Stoll Theatre, which was Peter Brook's *Titus Andronicus* – a play which had also been in the King's Company repertory.⁵⁷⁵ Stoll's closed in August 1957 and was demolished in 1958, the chairman of Stoll Theatres Corporation claiming it was disadvantaged by its location on the edge of the theatre district, and that it had been crippled by taxation.⁵⁷⁶ The building was replaced by an office block which housed a smaller, modern theatre in the basement named – in an unintentional but perhaps revealing echo of the past – The Royalty Theatre.

The Royalty Theatre was a two-tier auditorium holding an audience of 997. It was home to theatre, musicals, concerts and trade shows and spent periods as a cinema and television studio.⁵⁷⁷ The space has since been renamed The Peacock Theatre, which at the time of writing shows dance, opera and circus under the umbrella of Sadler's Wells. On their website, Sadler's Wells demonstrate awareness of the site's history, and emphasise the theatre's cultural and theatrical lineage by referring to the precedents set in the space:

Although the current building first opened its doors in 1960, there has been a theatre on the site since the 17th century. 'Mrs. Hughes' scandalised the public on 8 December 1660 when she became the first woman actor to take to the stage at the Vere Street Theatre in Clare Market⁵⁷⁸

Remembering Gibbons' specifically for its role in bringing women to the stage demonstrates contemporary priorities and interests: the idea of the first actresses is important to modern society, and is probably the innovation that Restoration theatre is most widely recognised for. This certainly was one of the key ways that Gibbons' contributed to the English theatre tradition, although it is interesting that no other features of Gibbons' are considered distinctive enough to note in this potted history of the site.

However, Sadler's Wells is correct to highlight the significance of this area to the process of women's legal and theatrical enfranchisement generally. The London Opera House was booked for a suffrage movement meeting on 7 March 1912, and was searched by police for

⁵⁷⁴ Phyllis Hartnoll and Peter Found, 'Stoll Theatre', in *The Concise Oxford Companion to the Theatre* <www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192825742.001.0001/acref-9780192825742-e-2913> [accessed 26 November 2016].

⁵⁷⁵ Hartnoll and Found, 'Stoll Theatre'.

⁵⁷⁶ 'International: London's Stoll Theatre to be Demolished Soon', *Variety (Archive: 1905-2000)*, Jun 19 1957, 207.3, p.14.

⁵⁷⁷ Phyllis Hartnoll and Peter Found, 'Royalty Theatre', in *The Concise Oxford Companion to the Theatre*, <www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192825742.001.0001/acref-9780192825742-e-2654> [accessed 26 November 2016].

⁵⁷⁸ 'Sadler's Wells Theatre – History – Peacock Theatre', Sadler's Wells, <<http://www.sadlerswells.com/about-us/history/peacock-theatre/>> [accessed 29 Nov. 2016]

Christabel Pankhurst, who was in hiding, the day before.⁵⁷⁹ The New York Times reports that when Hammerstein was asked during the raid whether he was a sympathiser he replied

I don't know anything about it [...] except that I let the opera house to them before they started on their stunts, and I can't break the contract, or they might break up the opera house.⁵⁸⁰

Given the context of the question, it seems likely Hammerstein would have been obliged to plead ignorance and impartiality, but his willingness to let the venue to members of the women's suffrage movement – even if it was before militancy occurred – seems to demonstrate sympathy to that cause. Moreover, an even more explicitly feminist theatrical venture was happening just around the corner at the Kingsway Theatre. Penley's Theatre was refurbished and managed by feminist actress and theatre manager Lena Ashwell in 1907, and her 'political and ideological beliefs infiltrated her work to a significant degree during these years' including insisting on 'good parts for women in plays submitted for performance'.⁵⁸¹ The Pioneer Players were a politicised theatre group run by Ellen Terry's daughter Edith Craig, who occupied the Kingsway during their opening season in May 1911. During this season they performed *The First Actress*, a play written by Christopher St. John (the pen name of Craig's lover Christabel Marshall) which celebrates Margaret Hughes at the time of her first performance at Gibbons' Tennis Court in 1660, and who is supported through disillusionment and impending failure by the actresses of the future, who appear in a dream to hail her as a pioneer. Those involved in the production were campaigners for women's suffrage, and were self-consciously performing the history of women on the stage in a politicised and feminist context; it does not seem to be a coincidence that they performed *The First Actress* just around the corner from where Hughes had first performed Desdemona at Gibbons' Tennis Court in 1660.

It was not only the name of the Pioneer Players that demonstrated a self-conscious awareness of space and how its physical occupation is akin to power and ownership; the play's analysis frames ideological male supremacy in the same way as the colonialism of geographic territory. It points to the ridiculousness of an 'old map where the world is divided into two by a straight

⁵⁷⁹ 'LONDON POLICE HUNT FOR MISS PANKHURST'; Hammerstein's Opera House, Where Suffragists Meet To-night, Is Searched', New York Times, 7 March 1912, 1, <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9D04E1DC133AE633A25754C0A9659C946396D6CF&legacy=true>>, p.1.

⁵⁸⁰ 'LONDON POLICE HUNT FOR MISS PANKHURST', p.1.

⁵⁸¹ Maggie B. Gale, 'Ashwell, Lena [*real name* Lena Margaret Pocock; *married name* Lena Margaret Simson, Lady Simson] (1872–1957)', in ODNB, Oxford University Press (2004) <[doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/30476](https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30476)>; Katharine Cockin, *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage: The Pioneer Players, 1911-1925* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p.31.

line', with each side belonging to Spain or Portugal.⁵⁸² And yet, it argues, space is similarly divided for men and women – with each confined to inhabiting particular physical and ideological spaces. Considering the possibility of this being overturned, the modern actress declares to Hughes '[i]f in my day that archaic map is superseded, we shall not forget that it was first made to look foolish when women mounted the stage. Brave Hughes – forgotten pioneer – your comrades offer you a crown!'.⁵⁸³

The concept of pioneering is imbued with geographic implications, and demonstrates that the company perceived both Hughes and themselves to be setting foot in unexplored territory in order to rewrite the map of society. Indeed, Katherine Cockin demonstrates that the Pioneer Players 'aligned the performer with the political activist in a tradition beginning with Margaret Hughes as the 'forgotten pioneer'".⁵⁸⁴ Noting that the company name was taken from Olive Schreiner's *The Pioneers*, published just a few months before the formation of the theatre company, Cockin shows how Schreiner conceptualises feminist progress topographically: she 'envisages a new landscape for which new maps will be required. The actress is endowed with the privileged role of radical cartographer of the separate spheres allocated in dominant discourse to women and men'.⁵⁸⁵

As the concept of inhabiting physical space and the act of tracing a historical lineage of female forebears was so vital to the feminist discourse of the time, it seems highly likely that the site where Hughes had first performed would have been known to the company, particularly as St. John had 'applied her expertise as an historian' to the script.⁵⁸⁶ As such, it was unlikely to be a coincidence that the premiere of the play took place extremely near the site of Gibbons' Tennis Court, where Hughes' first performances had taken place.

⁵⁸² Christopher St John, *The First Actress* (London: Utopia Press, nd) typescript 17 pp. ETMM; typescript LCP 1911/14, cited in Cockin, p.86.

⁵⁸³ Christopher St John, *The First Actress* (London: Utopia Press, nd) typescript 17 pp. ETMM; typescript LCP 1911/14, cited in Cockin, p.86.

⁵⁸⁴ Cockin, p.85.

⁵⁸⁵ p.85.

⁵⁸⁶ Cockin, p.85.

Conclusion

The chapter has argued that Gibbons' Tennis Court should not be considered a failed or interim space, but as having had a profound influence on the development of English theatrical tradition and architecture. The critical positioning of it as derivative of the old English tradition, and thus a 'transitional' or 'Elizabethan' space has led to its importance and theatrical innovations being overlooked. This has been due to an anachronistic application of the future fates of the King's and Duke's companies, and a negative conception of Killigrew's talent and business acumen having an undue influence on the interpretation of the evidence.

Rather, Gibbons' had a new play commissioned and performed before Lisle's, appears to have been the first playhouse to stage a performance with a female actor, and deviated from previous English professional tradition by being the first public playhouse in a tennis court, which had an architectural impact on the design of English theatre space that has lasted to this day. Nor does the evidence particularly demonstrate that it was outstripped by Lisle's: Pepys patronises the two equally, and it is unclear that the move to Bridges Street was a response because Gibbons' was unable to house scenery.

The repertory on the playbill for Hammerstein's Opera house, built on the spot of Gibbons' Tennis Court, contains French operatic adaptations of three early modern plays: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Doctor Faustus* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. These can be used to plot a winding route from this twentieth century opera house back to the repertory of the King's Company at Gibbons' Tennis Court (which included *The Merry Wives*), and back further to the first years of the company that the King's probably inherited reputation and repertory from: then called The Chamberlain's Men, they performed both *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at the Curtain, one of their very first homes. There does not have to be intention, or even awareness of these links for them to hold significance. Unpicking one strand of the complex web of repertories, companies and theatrical space that has woven together over time it becomes clear how much continuity there is in English dramatic tradition, and how an ongoing process of influence and resurgence has operated from the inception of the professional London theatre to the modern day.

Conclusion

The Development of Early English Playhouses

In 'Elizabethan: Restoration Palimpsest' Alfred Harbage proposed that some apparently newly-written Restoration plays were in fact adaptations of older plays that have since been lost.⁵⁸⁷ His analogy of the palimpsest – the idea that by reading below the surface of the new we might discover traces of the old – speaks to the way that this thesis has considered both the evolving topography of London around sites of theatrical performance, and the accumulation of historiographical writing about early modern theatre and playhouses. It has proposed that textual and temporal residue has built up in layers over an understanding of the theatre industry of the past, and that different versions of this story are exposed at different times and by different emphasis.

In trying to scratch through these temporal and textual layers to uncover an original script – reality as it 'really' happened – ironically, this thesis can only add a new layer on top. Perhaps the problem is the lack of an immovable original document underneath: even the events as they truly unfolded, in all their quotidian messiness, would have to be strung together by stories in order to create meaning. And as is well known by everyone interested in the early modern, the original printed object is hardly an unproblematic entity which conveys a reliable truth.

As such, this thesis has considered how playhouses developed across early modern London, but it has also interrogated how we conceptualise them, and how their identities changed and reiterated themselves throughout the early modern period and at each subsequent temporal moment up to the present day. In keeping with this emphasis on perpetual continuity, I have challenged the way in which historical periodisation has influenced evaluation of the early modern theatrical landscape and the weight which some playhouses have been given. 'Elizabethan', 'Jacobean', 'Caroline', 'Civil War', 'Commonwealth' and 'Restoration' all carry their own associations, and which one a playhouse is placed into will invariably influence how it is considered. Due to these artificial and reductive boundaries, Gibbons' Tennis Court has been seen as a transitional space which rounded off the previous hundred years of playhouse development and bridged the gap to the Restoration, handing the baton to Lisle's Tennis Court to usher in a new kind of playhouse architecture and performance. Salisbury Court, moreover, has been considered both imitative and transitional, being considered a Caroline imitation of its superior Jacobean predecessors and an oddity, interesting by virtue of being the unique Caroline playhouse which links more important periods. The years which these narratives build up to and fall away from are inevitably the years of Shakespeare's career, but as

⁵⁸⁷ 'Elizabethan: Restoration Palimpsest', *The Modern Language Review*, 35.3 (1940), p.287.

important is the effect of the civil war and Commonwealth periods on the perceived developments of the theatre. Chapter 2 demonstrated how the continuity and development of playhouse traditions and space were unbroken during this time, and argued that this knowledge can profitably be applied to an understanding of playhouses as entities which span different monarchic eras.

The roots and the legacy of the playhouses studied reach further backwards and forwards than their conventionally understood lifespan. Acknowledging this is crucial, I have argued, to understanding how playhouses had impact and where innovation in the industry originated. Indeed, Chapter 1 proposed that early modern theatrical space has been canonised: this relates not only to some spaces being considered in the main tradition of English drama and others not, and a hierarchy of value being created between those in the former group, but the reductive number of years which many playhouses' activities are considered to 'count' for.

In unpicking the hierarchization of canonised spaces, this thesis has argued that the identity of a venue must be considered to be more complex than whether it was indoors or outdoors, and emphasised the importance of both architectural and stylistic diversity within these groups: there was no 'archetype' of either an indoor or an outdoor playhouse. Another proposed factor for the establishment of importance is the strength of connection to Shakespeare, which I contend features in a disproportionate way that cannot feasibly be thought to reflect any kind of lived reality.

While I suggested the primary role of theatre historians should not be to rank the value of playhouses, I tested certain metrics which might fairly indicate worth, including longevity, innovation and legacy. The Curtain, Salisbury Court and Gibbons' Tennis Court have all been valued poorly in scholarly narratives, and perhaps in the case of the Curtain, when they were active. In reconstructing the textual and archaeological evidence about them, I have reappraised scholarly representation of each of them and in each instance argued that they have been both neglected and unduly denigrated. I have suggested that the Curtain's temporal longevity, Salisbury Court's innovations in dramatic genre, and Gibbons' Tennis Court's legacy of ongoing theatrical reverberations in the surrounding area demonstrate each of their individual worths.

This thesis has considered how English playhouses developed across the early modern period, but it has also tried to unpick how conceptualisation of them has developed ever since then. Early modern playhouses now exist only through the archaeological, textual and material traces of them that remain, and through the narratives that have been created from this evidence. While the narrative created in this thesis can only ever be part of that development, its contribution has been to suggest that three neglected playhouses should be given slightly

more lines in future, to suggest how the script could be rewritten, and to argue that it should be.

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Appendix 1: The Curtain's Repertory

Company	Play	Author	Date	Probability	Status
Chamberlain's Men	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	William Shakespeare	1597/8	Certain	Extant
Chamberlain's Men	<i>Henry IV part 1</i>	William Shakespeare	1597/8	Certain	Extant
Chamberlain's Men	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	William Shakespeare	1597/8	Certain	Extant
Chamberlain's Men	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	William Shakespeare	1598	Probable	Extant
Chamberlain's Men	<i>Henry V</i>	William Shakespeare	1599	Probable	Extant
Chamberlain's Men	<i>Every Man in his Humour</i>	Ben Jonson	1598-1599	Certain	Extant
Unknown	<i>Title unknown. Plot = Englishman fights men of other nationalities for a woman. Beats them all except the German man, so gets him drunk and steals back the woman.</i>	Unknown	1599	Probable ⁵⁸⁸	Lost?
Unknown. Referred to as 'certain players'.	<i>Unknown. It was considered to be libellous towards 'the persons of some gentlemen of good desert and quality that are yet alive', who were represented in a way that was disguised but still obvious to all observers.</i>	Unknown. Author was unknown in 1601 as the Privy Council ordered Middlesex Justices of the Peace to find out.	By 10 May 1601	Certain	Lost?
Queen Anne's Men	<i>The Travels of Three English Brothers</i>	Day, Rowley and Wilkins	1607	Certain	Extant
'a company of young men of this city'	<i>The Hector of Germany</i>	W. Smith (either Wentworth or William?)	In or before 1615	Certain	Extant
Unknown	<i>Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay</i> ⁵⁸⁹	Robert Greene	1613	Possible (If not this play, there was another one about 'friars')	Extant
The Prince's Men ⁵⁹⁰	<i>Wit at Several Weapons</i>	Middleton and Rowley	1613?	Possible	Extant
The Prince's Men	<i>The World Tossed at Tennis</i>	Middleton and Rowley	1619-1620	Probable	Extant
The Prince's Men	<i>The Man in the Moon Drinks Claret</i>	Unknown	By 1621	Probable	Lost

⁵⁸⁸ This would be certain, but Egan has thrown some doubt on the issue by suggesting the account could refer to the Boar's Head instead. See 'Thomas Platter's account of an unknown play at the Curtain or the Boar's Head', *Notes and Queries*, 47 (2000), 53-56. All other sources affirm the account of a play at the Curtain.

⁵⁸⁹ John Orrell, 'The London Stage in the Florentine Correspondence, 1604-1618', in *Theatre Research International*, 3.3, (1978), p.158.

⁵⁹⁰ I have included members of the Prince's Men's repertory which appear likely to have been in their performance repertory during their various residencies at the Curtain. There are, however, some other members of their repertory which could have been performed in revival. For an excellent and thorough discussion of the Prince's Men repertory, and for a chart listing their entire known repertory irrespective of playhouse, see David Nicol, 'The Repertory of Prince Charles's (I) Company, 1608-1625', *Early Theatre*, 9.2 (2006), 57-72.

Appendix 1: The Curtain's Repertory

The Prince's Men	<i>The Witch of Edmonton</i>	Rowley, Dekker, Ford, &c.	1621	Probable	Extant
The Prince's Men	<i>The Duche Painter and the French brank</i>	Unknown	1622	Certain	Lost
The Prince's Men	<i>The Birth of Merlin, or, the Child Hath Found his Father</i>	William Rowley	1622	Certain	Extant
The Prince's Men	<i>Love's Royal Reward</i>	Unknown	1622	Certain	Lost
The Prince's Men	<i>A Vow and a Good One</i>	Unknown	(By January) 1623	Probable	Lost
The Prince's Men (probable)	<i>The Escapes of Jupiter</i>	Thomas Heywood	By August 1623	Possible	Lost
Unknown	<i>The Tragedy of the Plantation of Virginia</i>	Unknown	August 1623	Certain	Lost

Appendix 2: Gibbons' Tennis Court repertory

Play	Author	Henry Herbert	Downes	Pepys	First performance	Genre	Company
Wit without money	Fletcher	Yes	No	Yes	1614	Comedy	Lady Elizabeth's Men
The Traitor	Shirley	Yes	Yes	Yes	1631	Tragedy	Queen Henrietta's Men
The Beggars Bushe	Fletcher and Massinger	Yes	Yes	Yes	1616	Comedy	King's Men
Henry the fourthe. First Play.	Shakespeare	Yes	Yes	Yes	1597	History	Hunsdon's Men (formerly and subsequently Lord Chamberlain's)
The merry wives of Windsor	Shakespeare	Yes	Yes	Yes	1597	Comedy	Lord Chamberlain's Men
The sylent Woman	Jonson	Yes	Yes	Yes	1610	Comedy	Children of the Queen's Revels
Loue lies a Bleedinge [Philaster]	Beaumont and Fletcher	Yes	Yes	Yes	1609	Tragicomedy	King's Men
Loues Cruelty	Shirley	Yes	No	No	1631	Tragedy	Queen Henrietta's Men
The widowe	Middleton	Yes	Yes	Yes	1615	Comedy	King's Men
The mayds Tragedy	Beaumont and Fletcher	Yes	Yes	Yes	1611	Tragedy	King's Men
The Unfortunate Louers	Davenant	Yes	No	No	1638	Tragedy	King's Men
The Scornfull Lady	Beaumont and Fletcher	Yes	Yes	Yes	1610	Comedy	Children of the Queen's Revels

Appendix 2: Gibbons' Tennis Court repertory

The Elder Brother	Fletcher and Massinger	Yes	Yes	Yes	1618	Comedy	King's Men
The Chances	Fletcher	Yes	Yes	Yes	1617	Comedy	King's Men
The Opertunity	Shirley	Yes	Yes	No	1634	Comedy	Queen Henrietta's Men
The Humorous Lieutenant	Fletcher	Yes	Yes	No	1619	Tragicomedy	King's Men
Claricilla	Thomas Killigrew	Yes	No	Yes	1636	Tragicomedy	Queen Henrietta's Men
A Kinge and no Kinge	Beaumont and Fletcher	Yes	Yes	Yes	1611	Tragicomedy	King's Men
Rollo, Duke of Normandy (also known as the bloody brother)	Fletcher, Massinger, Jonson and Chapman	Yes	Yes	Yes	1619	Tragedy	King's Men
The moore of Uenice	Shakespeare	Yes	Yes	No	1604	Tragedy	King's Men
The weddinge	Shirley	Yes	No	No	1626	Comedy	Queen Henrietta's Men
The Lost Lady	William Berkeley	Yes	No	Yes	1637	Tragicomedy	King's Men
Argalus and Parthenia	Henry Glapthorne	Yes	Yes	Yes	1638	Tragicomedy	Beeston's Boys
Loyall Subject	Fletcher	Yes	No	No	1618	Tragicomedy	King's Men
Mad louer	Fletcher	Yes	No	No	1616	Tragicomedy	King's Men
The wildgoose chase	Fletcher	Yes	No	No	1621	Comedy	King's Men
All's Loste by Luste	Rowley	Yes	No	No	1619	Tragedy	Prince Charles' Men

Appendix 2: Gibbons' Tennis Court repertory

The mayde In the mill	Fletcher and Rowley	Yes	No	No	1623	Comedy	King's Men
A wife for a monthe	Fletcher	Yes	No	No	1624	Tragicomedy	King's Men
The bondman	Massinger	Yes	No	No	1623	Tragicomedy	Lady Elizabeth's Men
Uittoria Corumbana	Webster	Yes	Yes	Yes	1612	Tragedy	Queen Anne's Men
The Cuntry Captaine	William Cavendish	Yes	No	Yes	1640	Comedy	King's Men
The Alchymist	Jonson	Yes	Yes	Yes	1610	Comedy	King's Men
Bartholomew Faire	Jonson	Yes	Yes	Yes	1614	Comedy	Lady Elizabeth's Men
The Spanishe Curate	Fletcher and Massinger	Yes	No	Yes	1622	Comedy	King's Men
The Tamer Tamed	Fletcher	Yes	No	Yes	1610	Comedy	Uncertain
Aglaure [as a tragicomedy]	Suckling	Yes	No	No	1637	Tragicomedy	King's Men
Bussy Dambois	Chapman	Yes	No	No	1604	Tragedy	Children of Paul's
mery deuill of Edmonton	Anon	Yes	Yes	Yes	1603	Comedy	Lord Chamberlain's Men
The Uirgin martire	Dekker and Massinger	Yes	No	Yes	1620	Tragedy	Revels Company
Jouiall Crew	Brome	Yes	Yes	Yes	1641	Comedy	Beeston's Boys
Rule a wife and Haue a wife	Fletcher	Yes	Yes	Yes	1624	Comedy	King's Men
Aglaure the Tragical way	Suckling	Yes	No	No	1637	Tragedy	King's Men
Zelindra	William Killigrew	Yes	Yes	No	1662	Tragicomedy	King's Company

Appendix 2: Gibbons' Tennis Court repertory

The Frenche dancinge Master	William Cavendish and Shirley	Yes	No	Yes	1641	Comedy	King's Men
The Litle Theefe	Fletcher and Shirley	Yes	No	Yes	1615	Comedy	Lady Elizabeth's Men
northerne Lasse	Brome	Yes	No	No	1629	Comedy	King's Men
Fathers owne son	Fletcher	Yes	No	Yes	1615	Comedy	Uncertain
The Suprizall	Robert Howard	Yes	Yes	No	1662	Comedy	King's Company
Knight of the Burning Pestle	Beaumont	Yes	No	Yes	1607	Comedy	Children of the Queen's Revels
Brenoralt [later referred to as Contented Collinell]	Suckling	Yes	No	Yes	1639	Tragedy	King's Men
Loue In a maze	Shirley	Yes	Yes	Yes	1632	Comedy	King's Revels (Prince Charles'?)
Loues Mistres	Heywood	Yes	No	Yes	1634	Classical Legend	Queen Henrietta's Men
Loue at first sight	Thomas Killigrew	Yes	No	Yes	1636	Tragicomedy	King's Men (?)
Cornelia a New Play, sir W. Bartleys	William Bartley/Berkeley	Yes	No	No	1662	Tragicomedy	King's Company
Renegado	Massinger	Yes	No	No	1624	Tragicomedy	Lady Elizabeth's Men
The Brothers	Shirley	Yes	No	No	1626	Unknown	Queen Henrietta's Men(?)
The Antipodes	Brome	Yes	No	Yes	1638	Comedy	Queen's Men
The Cardinal	Shirley	Yes	Yes	No	1641	Tragedy	King's Men

Appendix 2: Gibbons' Tennis Court repertory

Hamlet	Shakespeare	No	No	Yes	1600	Tragedy	Lord Chamberlain's Men
Midsummer Night's Dream	Shakespeare	No	No	Yes	1595	Comedy	Lord Chamberlain's Men
Julius Caesar	Shakespeare	No	Yes	No	1599	Tragedy	Lord Chamberlain's Men
Cataline's Conspiracy	Jonson	No	Yes	No	1611	Tragedy	King's Men
Every Man in his Humour	Jonson	No	Yes	No	1598	Comedy	Lord Chamberlain's Men
Every Man out of his Humour	Jonson	No	Yes	No	1599	Comedy	Lord Chamberlain's Men
Sejanus	Jonson	No	Yes	No	1603	Tragedy	King's Men
Titus Andronicus	Shakespeare	No	Yes	No	1592	Tragedy	Pembroke's Men (?)
The Devil is an Ass	Jonson	No	Yes	No	1616	Comedy	King's Men